

狂骨の夢

THE CRAZY BONES DREAM

story: Kyougoku Natsuhiko art: Shimizu Aki
translation & typesetting: sana @ shikiganai scans



TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

I apologize for the extremely long translator's notes for this chapter... but in order to really appreciate this manga, you need to have a fairly in-depth understanding of Japanese religion. Most people in Japan these days aren't especially religious, so this stuff definitely isn't common knowledge!

The Left-Hand Path

When Kyougoku speaks of "black magic", he literally calls it the "left-hand path." In Hinduism, the "dakshinachara" or "right-hand path" refers to orthodox spirituality, and the "vamamarga" or "left-hand path" refers to forbidden magic. This idea of left and right magic influenced Buddhism, Taoism and other Asian religions. Practitioners of left-handed magic engage in taboo practices including ritual sex, consuming meat and alcohol, and gathering in graveyards. Eastern-style left-handed magic spread to Europe and the United States in the 19th century via occultists like Madame Blavatsky and Aleister Crowley (although they naturally claimed that only their rivals engaged in such sinister practices).

The Way of Yin and Yang

You probably know that Japan has two major religions: Buddhism and Shinto. Shinto is the native religion of Japan, while Buddhism was imported from India by Chinese monks. But there's actually a third significant religion: Onmyoudou (The Way of Yin and Yang). Priests of onmyoudou (like Kyougokudou) are known as "onmyouji." Onmyoudou was closely connected to the Imperial Court, so as the power of the Imperial Court declined over the centuries, Onmyoudou fell into obscurity.

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTES (CONTINUED)

Onmyoudou is based on Taoism, a Chinese religion that deals with the balance of cosmic forces. In ancient times, Taoist alchemists would try to achieve immortality through various spells and potions, so some of this preoccupation with immortality was carried over into Onmyoudou. One of the major gods of Taoism is Taizan Fukun, the God of Mount Tai, who was said to possess a jade book in which human lifespans were recorded. When Buddhism came to China, Taizan Fukun was demoted to a servant of Yama, the Buddhist god of the underworld. But in Onmyoudou, Taizan Fukun is still invoked in rituals dealing with death.

The greatest onmyouji of all time was Abe no Seimei, a 10th-century nobleman who served the Imperial Court as an astrologer and exorcist. Although he was a real person, his life story has been heavily fictionalized. In one story, Seimei is killed and beheaded by servants of his lifelong rival, Ashiya Douman. Seimei's master, the Chinese sorcerer Hakudou, learns of his student's death and uses the power of Taizan Fukun to bring Seimei back to life. Douman then murders Seimei's father, Yasuna, but Seimei secretly uses the ritual he learned from Hakudou to resurrect his father. The next day, Seimei goes to the Imperial Court and challenges Douman to swear on his life that Yasuna is dead. Douman falls for the trick and is executed.

The Gods of Heaven and Earth

The holy texts of Shinto, Japan's oldest religion, speak of a civil war between the Gods of Earth and the Gods of Heaven. The earthly gods had chosen to ally themselves with humanity, while the heavenly gods were busy doing whatever it is that gods do. The Gods of Earth were led by Okuninushi, a god who taught early humans how to use fire, how to farm, and how to create medicines. Okuninushi's center of worship was in Izumo, the site of Shinto's holiest shrine. Interestingly, Okuninushi is connected to this manga's theme of resurrection - he was murdered (repeatedly) by his own brothers and revived by his mother. During the war between Heaven and Earth, Okuninushi was ordered to surrender all of his territory to Amaterasu, the sun goddess and leader of Heaven's forces. Okuninushi's son, Takeminakata, urged his father to stay and fight. The land rightfully belonged to the Gods of Earth who had nurtured, protected and educated generations of human beings... but the Gods of Heaven wanted the land for themselves. Okuninushi was Amaterasu's nephew, so this civil war was actually a bitter family feud. The Sun Goddess sent one of her loyal underlings, Takemikazuchi (the God of Strength), to subdue the rebellious Earth gods, but Takeminakata was pretty badass himself. As a god of war, he'd taught humans how to hunt and how to fight.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES (CONTINUED)

So Takeminata bravely faced the God of Strength in the first-ever sumo match, but he lost an arm in the battle and was forced to retreat. (Modern sumo wrestling honors this battle between the gods, but thankfully nobody's losing limbs these days!) The defeated Takeminakata fled across the country, seeking refuge in shrines that were still loyal to the Gods of Earth, until he reached the province of Suwa (near modern-day Nagano). As I mentioned before, the shrines that were significant to the Shinto cult in this story were all associated with these old rebel gods. Okuninushi was banished to the underworld, but Takeminakata continued to live in exile as the guardian god of Suwa.

In some versions of the story, Takeminakata died in Suwa and was reborn as a dragon, so his bones were distributed to many of the loyal shrines. As a protest against the Gods of Heaven, Takeminakata and the loyal Gods of Earth refuse to join the other gods in Izumo for their yearly meeting.

The stories of the Shinto gods originated long before writing came to Japan, but it's likely that they're a religious allegory for real events in Japan's prehistory. The first Emperor of Japan claimed to be descended from the Sun Goddess, so as his descendents conquered early Japan they brought their gods with them. Takeminakata symbolized the rebels who were chased into the mountains until they finally agreed to submit to Imperial rule. the Gods of Heaven were victorious, but the Gods of Earth survived in local belief. As a warrior god, Takeminakata (now called Suwa Myoujin) was widely worshipped by the samurai class. The famous warlord Takeda Shingen was a devotee of Takeminakata.

These days, Takeminakata is best known for his significance in climate change research! According to legend, Takeminakata and his wife, Yasakatome, live on opposite sides of Lake Suwa. In the winter, Takeminakata is said to walk across the frozen lake, leaving huge cracks in the ice. For 600 years, the priests of Suwa Shrine have kept detailed records of the ice on Lake Suwa, providing us with some of the world's oldest written data on climate change.

The province of Suwa was incorporated into Shinano Province (also called Shinshuu) in the 800s. In the 1800s, Shinshuu Province became Nagano Prefecture under the Meiji government restructuring, but even today it's not uncommon for it to be referred to by the old name. Shinshuu/Suwa still holds a unique place in Japanese culture. The region is isolated and mountainous, so beliefs that were banned in the rest of Japan were able to survive there. In addition to Takeminakata, the people of Suwa worshipped a forbidden god called Mishaguji, who took the form of a giant penis that could possess a human host and turn him into a living god. As you'll see in the next few chapters, many parts of this manga's backstory were influenced by the strange religious landscape of the Suwa region.

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CHAPTER 8



The strands entangle until they become one seething mass.

Slimy and wriggling, it lurks beneath the surface of the water.

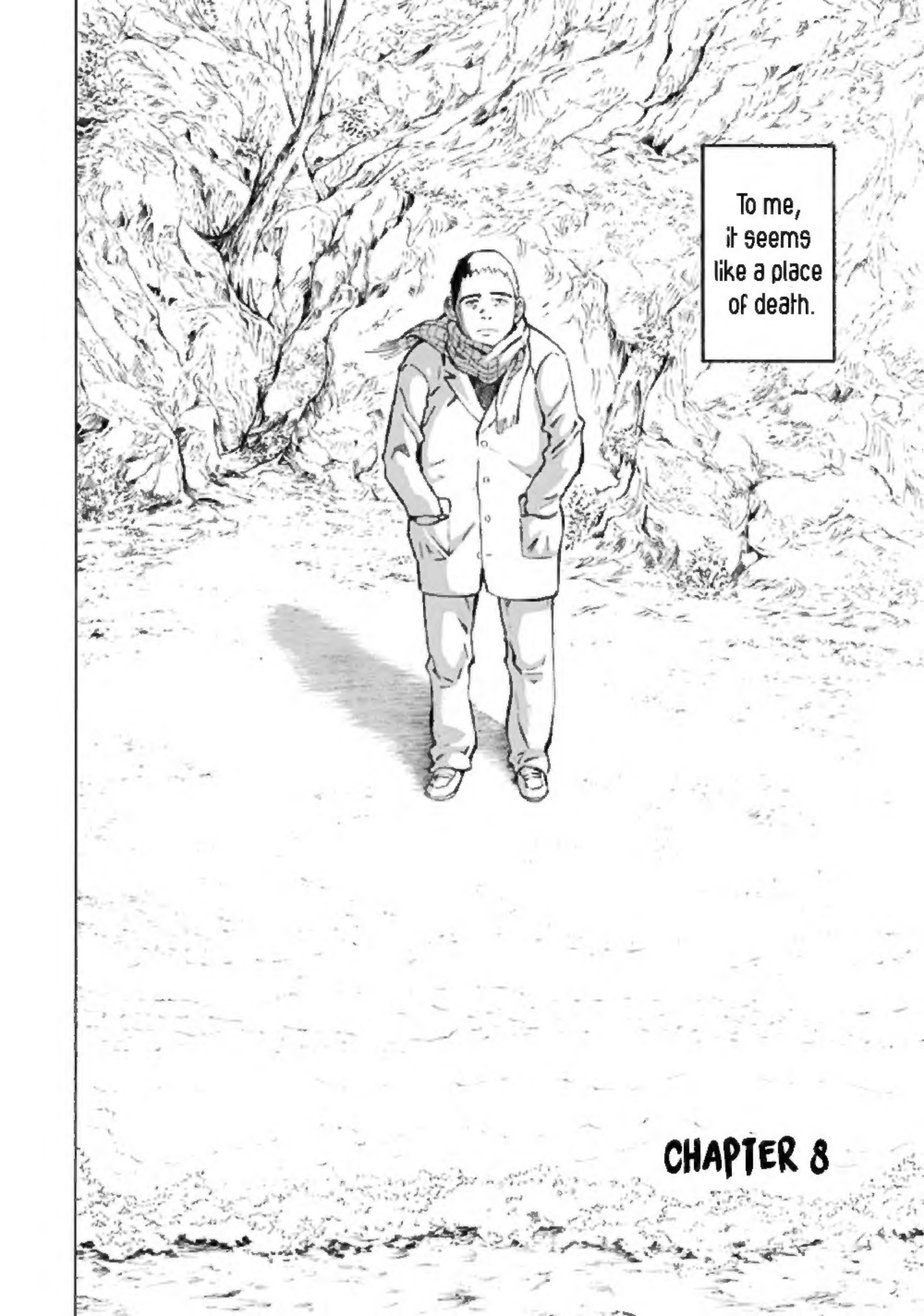


I hate seaweed.



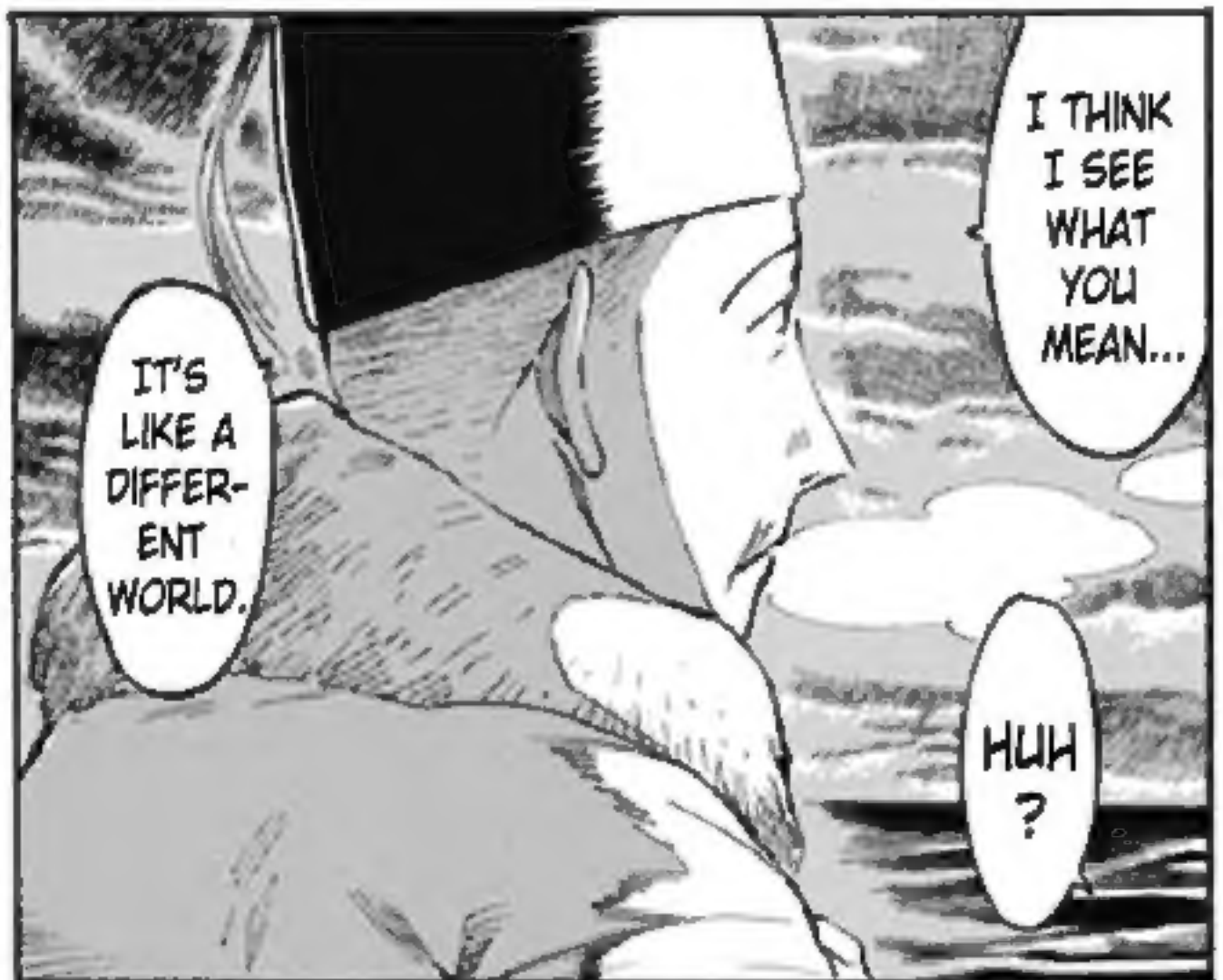
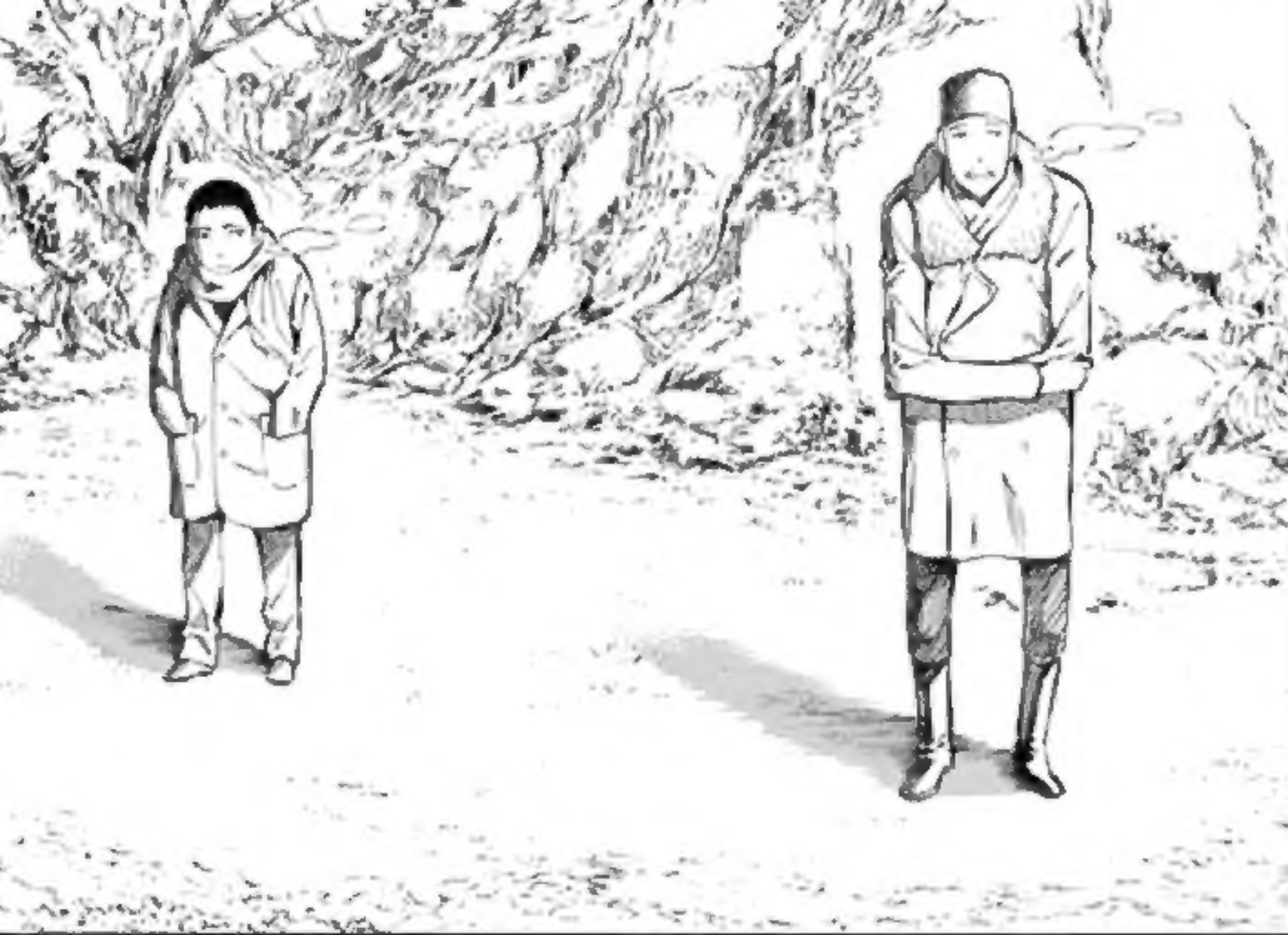
Some say it's the source of all life, but...

There's something terrifying about the ocean.



To me,
it seems
like a place
of death.

CHAPTER 8





YES, BUT...
WHAT DO
YOU WANT
WITH HIM?



I'M WITH
THE POLICE.
HAVE YOU
SEEN A MAN
WEARING
A MILITARY
UNIFORM?

Yesterday,
Inspector
Ishii
approved
Kyou-
gokudou's
proposal,
so we all
headed to
the Peach
Garden Hotel.

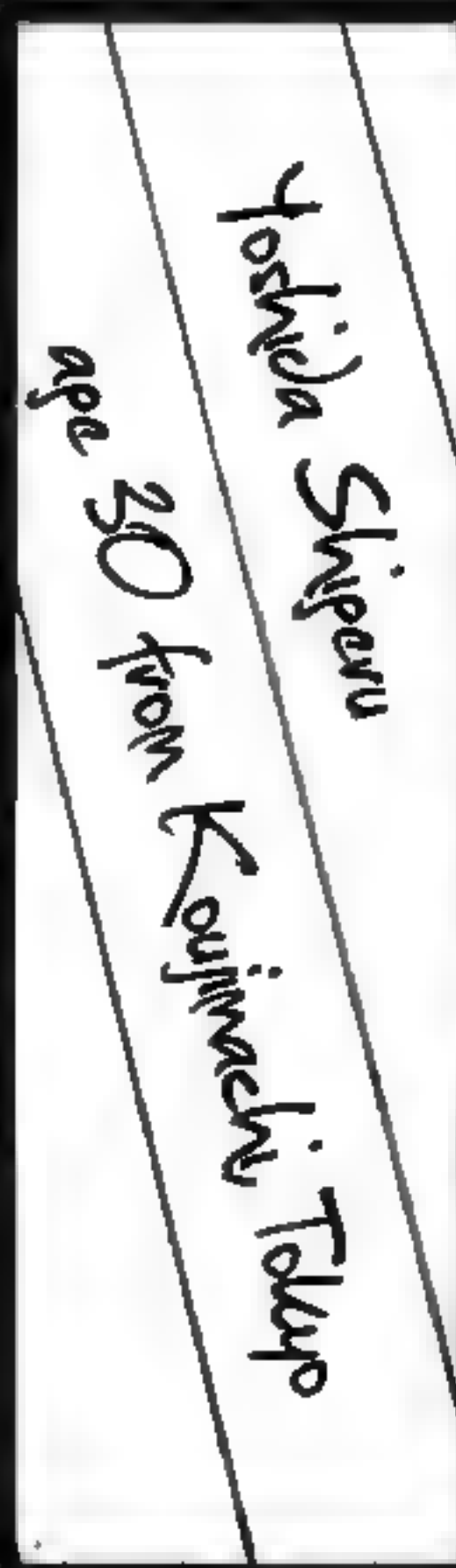


THERE
HE IS!
GET HIM!

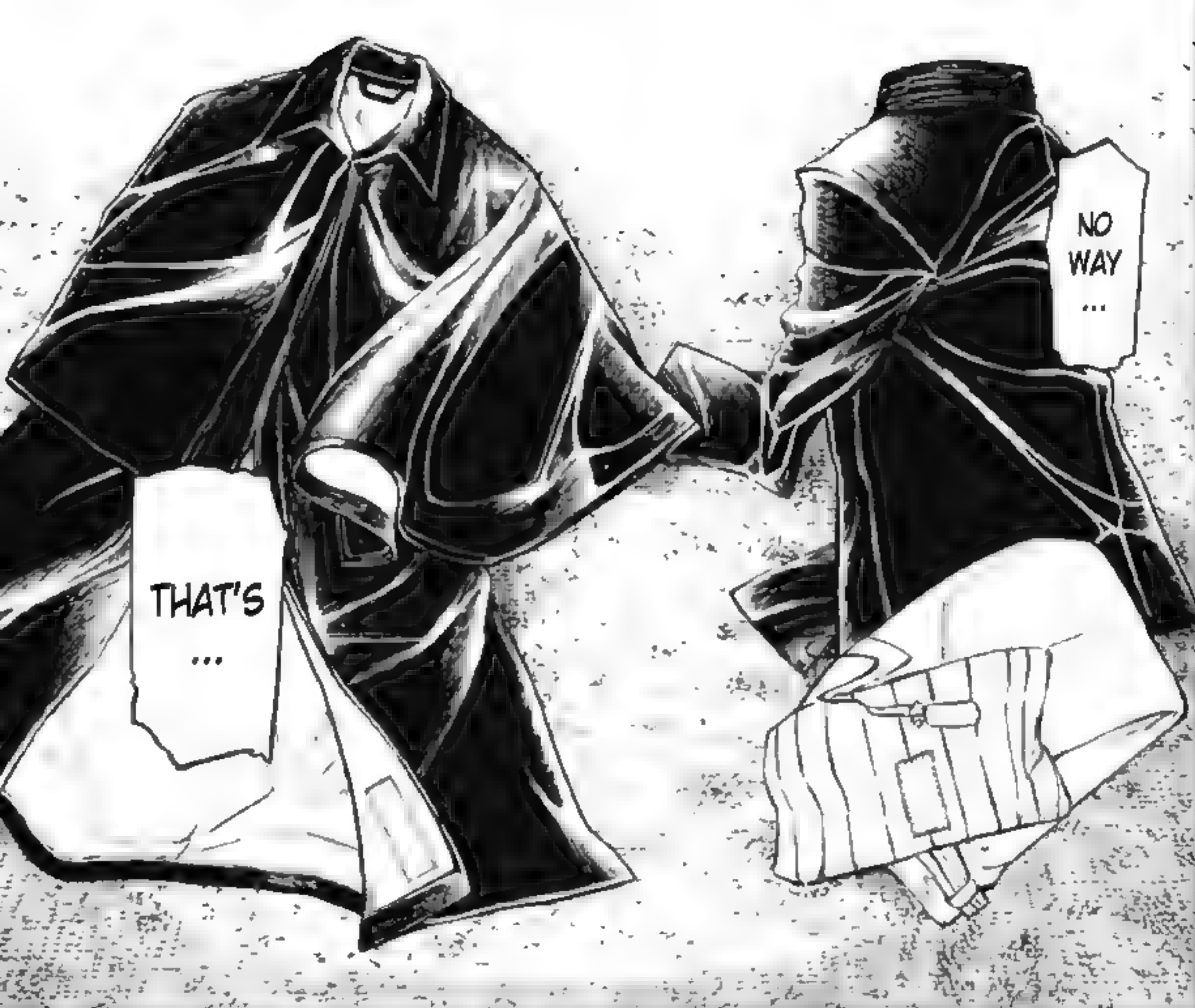
AH!



SFX: *shove*







THAT'S

...

NO
WAY

...

TELL THEM THAT
AS OF NOW,
THE MURDER OF
UDAGAWA, THE
ZUSHI BAY
BEHEADINGS, AND
THE FUTAGOYAMA
GROUP SUICIDE
CASE WILL ALL
BE INVESTIGATED
JOINTLY!

CONTACT
HEAD-
QUARTERS
IMMEDI-
ATELY!

THESE
CASES
ARE ALL
RELATED
SOMEHOW!!

AND
THAT'S
UDAGAWA
TAKASHI'S
CLOTHING

...

THAT'S THE
NAME OF
THE MAN
WHOSE
HEAD WAS
FOUND IN
THE BAY...

Udagawa
Takashi

YAZAWA
CHUNROKU



HAVEN'T WE
ALREADY
SEARCHED
UDAGAWA'S
HOUSE?

PRO-
TECTIVE
CUSTODY?
WHY?



NOW WE
NEED TO FIND
UDAGAWA'S
NEIGHBORS,
THE ICHIYANAGI
COUPLE, AND
BRING
THEM INTO
PROTECTIVE
CUSTODY!

AND THEN
WE'LL SEARCH
UDAGAWA'S
HOUSE!!



HEH



WE HAVEN'T
SEARCHED
THE WELL!

(YET!)





NOTE

He's referencing "Journey to the West," a famous Chinese novel.

NOTE In the original "Journey to the West", there are four main characters: Xuanzang, a delicate and pretty priest who's always getting into some sort of danger; Sun Wukong, the brilliant but wild and unrestrained Monkey King; Zhu Bajie, a lecherous and gluttonous half-pig creature; and Sha Wujing, a river monster who acts as the polite peacekeeper of the group. They all go on an adventure to India to retrieve some Buddhist scriptures. It's a very popular story in Japan.



NOTE Sha Wujing wore a necklace made from the skulls of nine monks who tried to attack him. After he killed the monks and ate their flesh, he threw their bones in the river... but the skulls magically floated, so he made them into a necklace. The skull of Xuanzang was enshrined in China until the mid-1950s, when it was supposedly stolen by the Dalai Lama and taken to India. But China and Japan claim to have their own pieces of Xuanzang's skull too...





UH,
ENO-SAN
AND I
WERE
CHILD-
HOOD
FRIENDS
...

FURUHATA-
KUN...
ARE THEY
FRIENDS
OF
YOURS?



HEY, YOU!!
COME ON,
LET'S GO.



SO
DON'T
BULLY
HIM.

WAIT,
ENO-SAN,
HE'S HELPED
ME A LOT...



THERE'S
SOMETHING
UNHOLY
HERE.



I'M SORRY,
BUT THIS
IS A HOLY
PLACE...
YOU CAN'T
JUST...



Go where?



HM?
I'M NOT
HERE TO
BULLY
HIM,
HATA-
CHAN.



I
DON'T
?

WHAT!?
YOU DON'T
HAVE THE
POWER
TO SAVE
PEOPLE!!

I'M
HERE TO
SAVE
HIM.



FURUHATA-
KUN...



AND NOT
SHIRAOKA
RYOICHI.

NO MATTER
HOW HARD
I'VE TRIED...
I'VE NEVER
BEEN ABLE TO
SAVE ANYONE.

NOT MY
PATIENTS
...



THE
ONLY
ONE WHO
CAN SAVE
PEOPLE
...

IS
GOD!



THE ONLY
PEOPLE
WHO CAN'T
BE SAVED
ARE PEOPLE
WHO DON'T
WANT TO
BE SAVED.

SNORT

ALL YOU
NEED IS
A LITTLE
FAITH,
RIGHT?



I... I JUST
DON'T WANT
UDAGAWA
AKEMI TO
SUFFER ALONE!
SHE DOESN'T
DESERVE THIS!



BUT THERE'S
SOMEONE
YOU WANT
TO SAVE,
RIGHT,
HATA-CHAN?



REIJIROU-KUN,
YOU UNDERSTAND,
DON'T YOU?
IF YOU'D SEEN THE
DARKNESS IN HER
HEART, YOU'D
UNDERSTAND!

NNNOPE,
I HAVE
NO CLUE.



AS FOR
THIS
AKEMI
LADY...

tch



ENO-
SAN,
STOP!





HE HAS
NOTHING
TO DO WITH
AKEMI-SAN'S
CASE!
LEAVE HIM
ALONE!

REIJIROU-
KUN,
THAT'S
ENOUGH!!



YOU LIVE IN
A DIFFERENT
WORLD FROM
NORMAL PEOPLE,
REIJIROU-KUN...

I NEVER
SHOULD HAVE
GONE TO
SHUU-SAN...
IT WAS A
MISTAKE TO
INVOLVE ALL
OF YOU!

YOU JUST
CAN'T
SEE IT
...



I...

UM...



YOU UNDER-
STAND ME,
DON'T YOU?

HOW
CAN YOU
LIVE LIKE
THIS!?



BUT YOU,
SEKIGUCHI-
SAN...

SHOCK

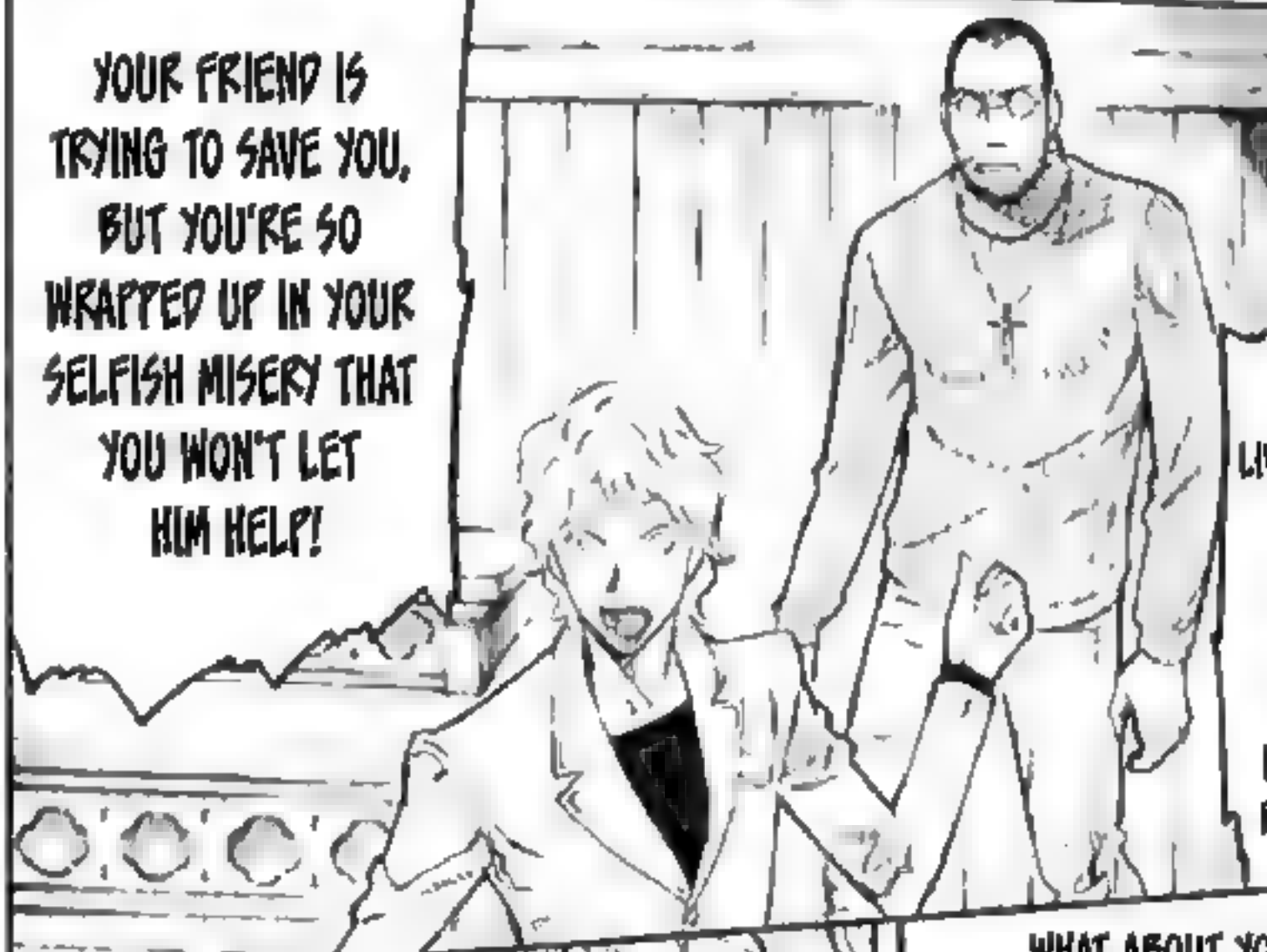


SEKIGUCHI-KUN
MAY BE A MONKEY,
BUT HE'S WAY
SMARTER THAN
YOU ARE!



EVERYBODY
CHILL THE
FUCK OUT!!

YOUR FRIEND IS
TRYING TO SAVE YOU,
BUT YOU'RE SO
WRAPPED UP IN YOUR
SELFISH MISERY THAT
YOU WON'T LET
HIM HELP!



YOU THINK YOU'VE
GOT "DARKNESS"
IN YOUR HEART?
YOU THINK THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
GOOD AND BAD IS AS
EASY AND CLEAR-CUT
AS FLIPPING A
LIGHT SWITCH!?

YOU THINK WE
LIVE IN "DIFFERENT
WORLDS?"
THERE'S ONLY
ONE WORLD!
QUIT BEING AN
IDIOT AND COME
BACK TO EARTH!!

EVEN IF YOU
DON'T THINK
YOU CAN BE
SAVED, I'LL
SAVE YOU!!



WHAT ABOUT YOU?
DO YOU WANT TO BE SAVED?
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO
BE SAVED, THEN YOU NEED
TO BELIEVE!
IF YOU CAN'T BELIEVE
IN YOURSELF, THEN
BELIEVE IN ME!!



LIM...







BEFORE
I ASK
GOD FOR
SALVATION,
I NEED TO
REPENT
FOR MY
SINS...

SO I'LL
CONFESS
THEM TO
ALL OF
YOU.

...
FOLLOW
ME.



THIS
MUST
BE THE
WILL OF
GOD...



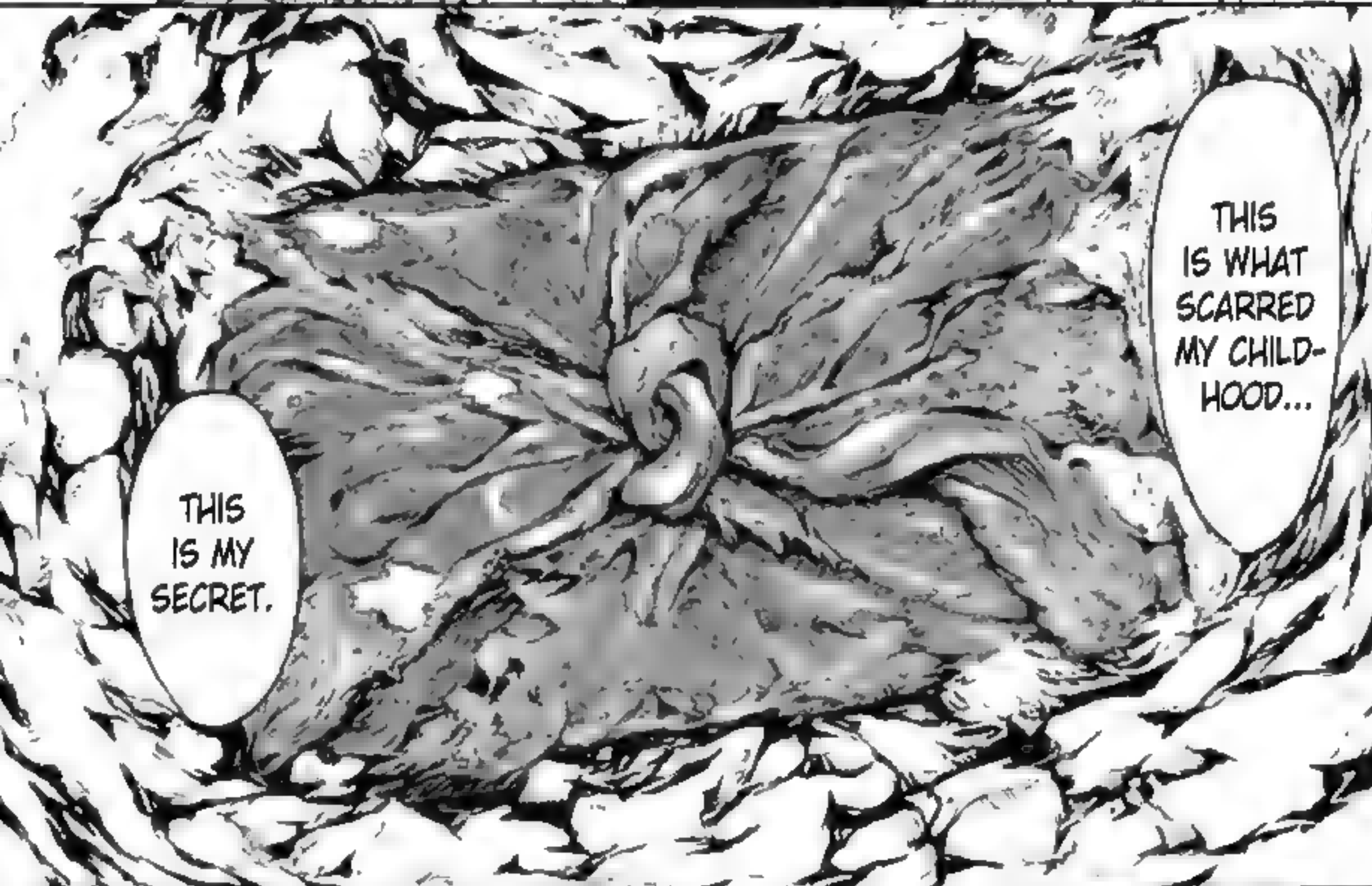
THEY DO
SAY THAT
GOD
WORKS IN
MYSTER-
IOUS
WAYS...



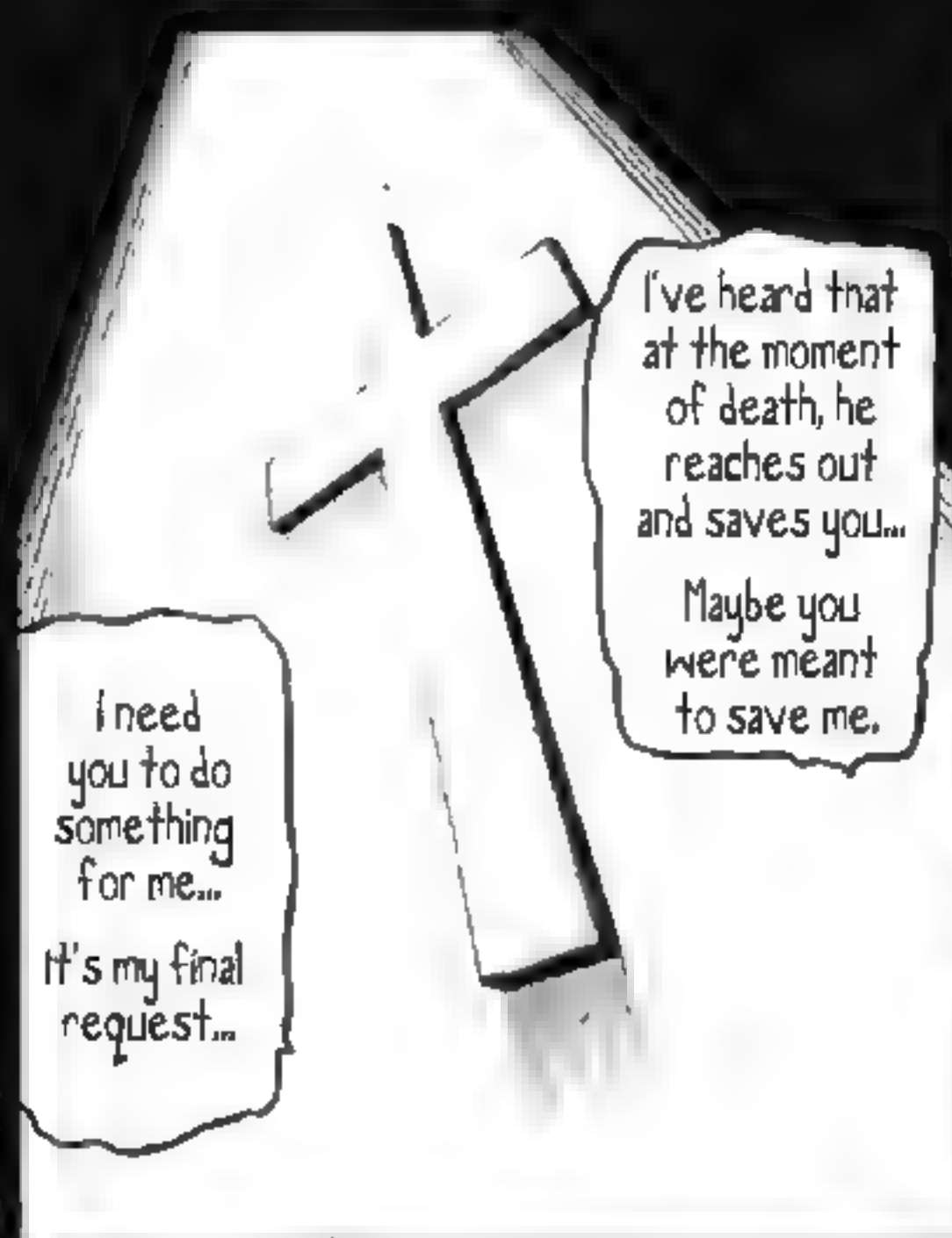
RYOU-
SAN...

IT MUST
BE HIS WILL
THAT PEOPLE
SAVE EACH
OTHER...









I need
you to do
something
for me...
It's my final
request...

I've heard that
at the moment
of death, he
reaches out
and saves you...

Maybe you
were meant
to save me.



LIM,
WELL
...

I don't know
much about the
Christian god...
He raises
the dead,
right?



No, it's
really not
the time
for a
theological
lesson...



This
is my
dying
wish...

Please...
find it...

I'm
begging
you...



**B-BUT
WHY DO YOU
WANT ME TO
FIND HUMAN
BONES?**



Inside
that box
is a human
skeleton,
complete
save for
the skull...

The
missing
piece
is here
in Zushi...



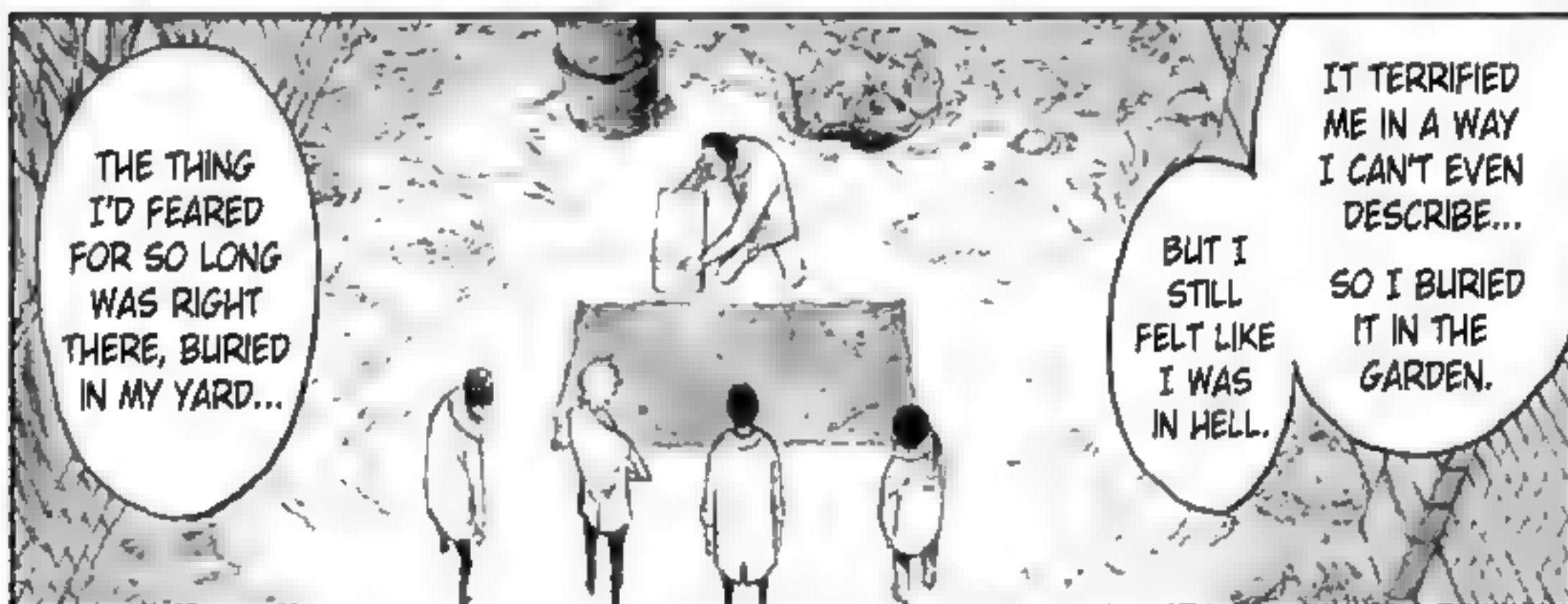
Can be reborn...



So our god...

S...







THIS IS THE
NAVICULAR
TARSAL
BONE OF
THE FOOT.



THE REMAINDER
IS MADE OF
COLLAGEN AND
PROTEIN.

ARE
COMPOSED
OF 60-70%
INORGANIC
CALCIUM.



BONES
...



BUT
LOOK
...

THERE'S
THE
RIGHT
FIBULA.



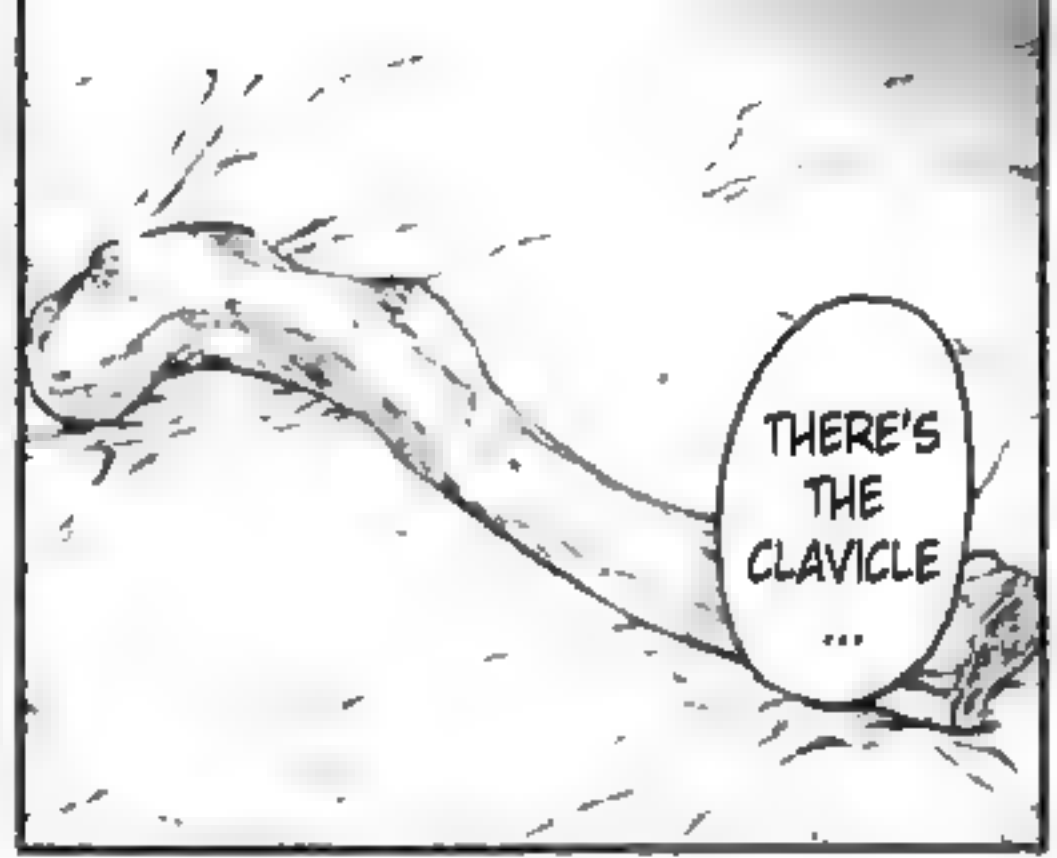
I USED TO
THINK THAT THE
HUMAN BODY
WAS SOMETHING
CRUDE, AND
THAT THE BONES
WERE MERELY
A RELIC OF
OUR ANIMAL
SELVES.



THIS IS
THE LEFT
FIBULA.



THERE'S
THE
SCAPULA.



THERE'S
THE
CLAVICLE
...

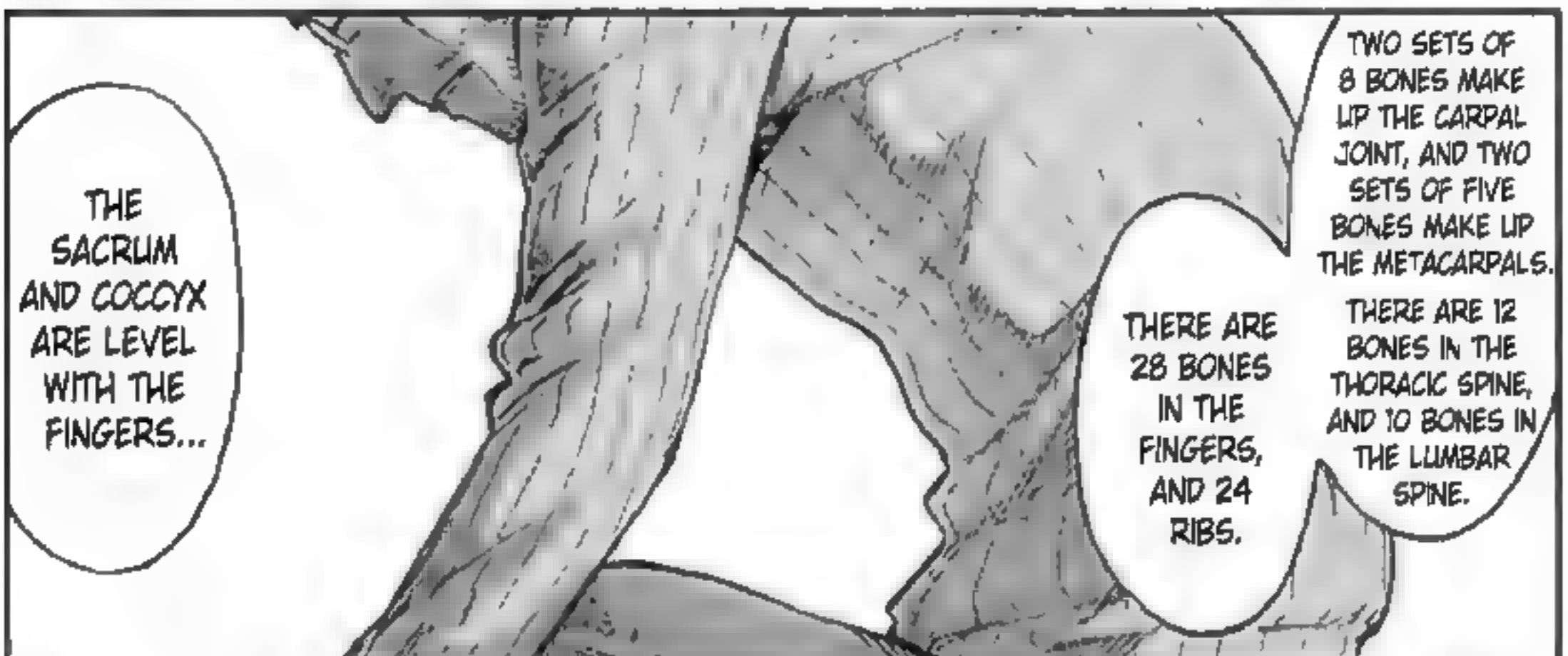


THE
HUMERUS,
THE RADIUS,
THE ULNA...

THE
PELVIC BONE,
THE FEMUR,
THE TIBIA...



THE PATELLA,
THE TALUS,
THE CALCANEUS...
EACH PERFECTLY
PAIRED.

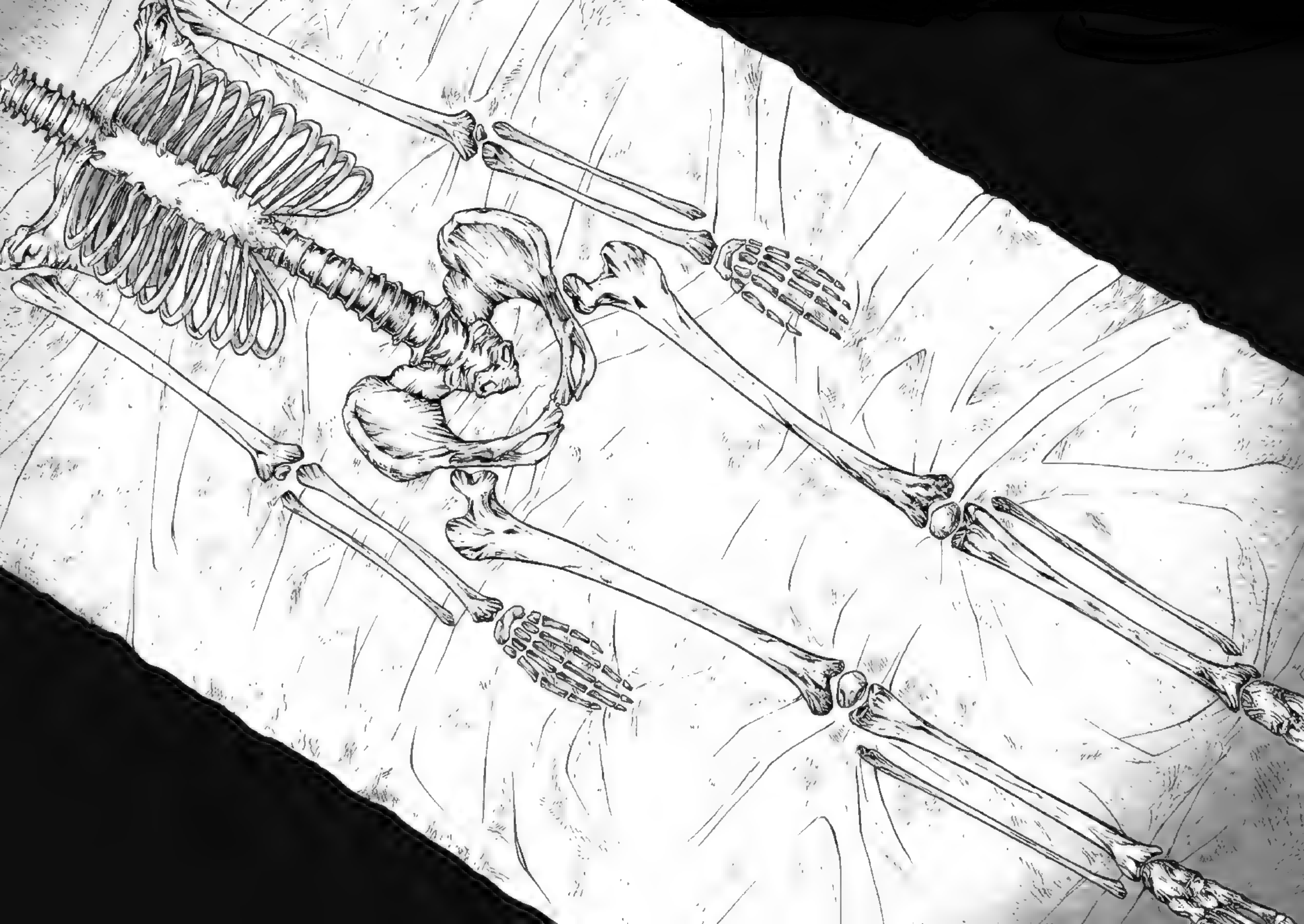


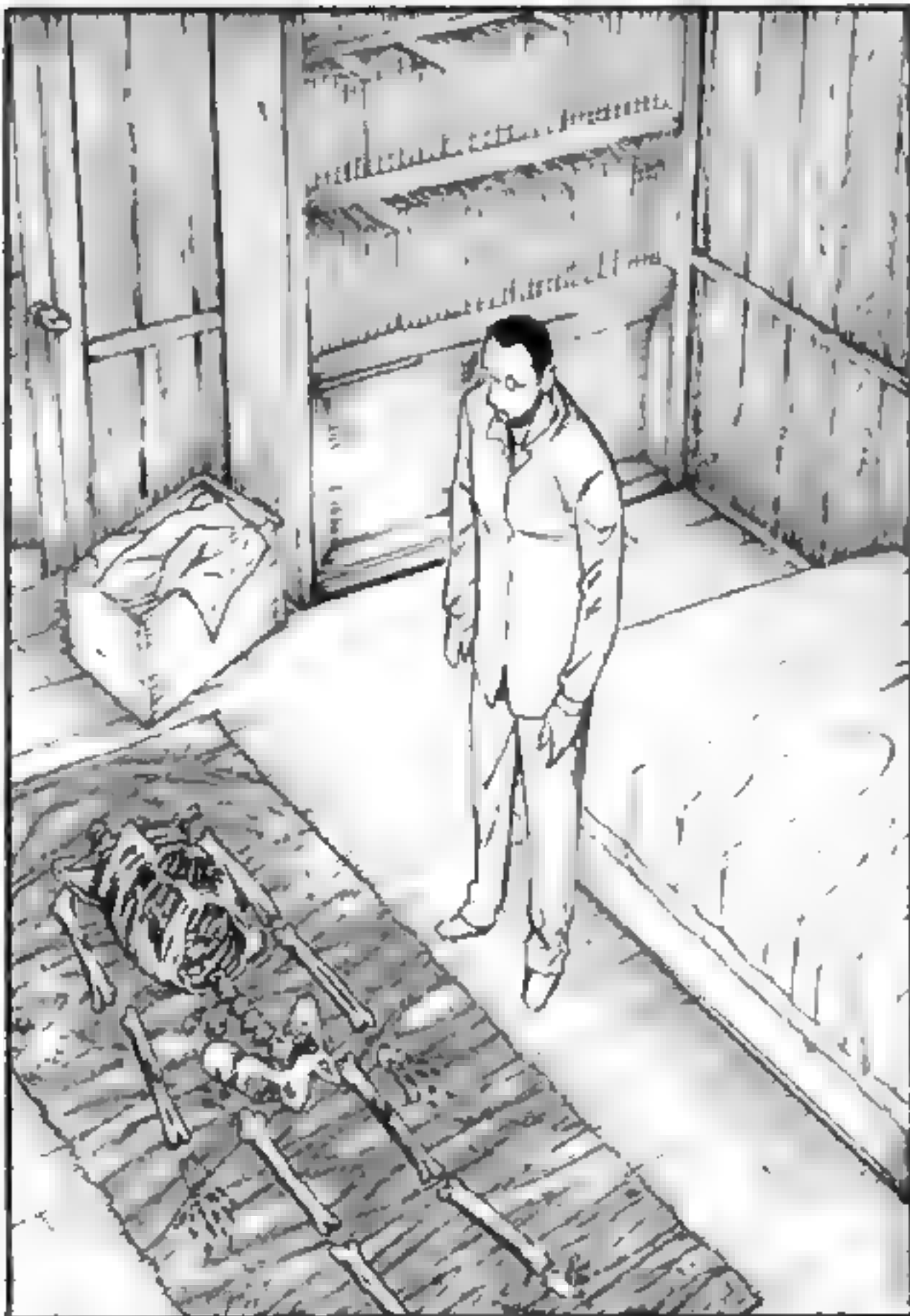
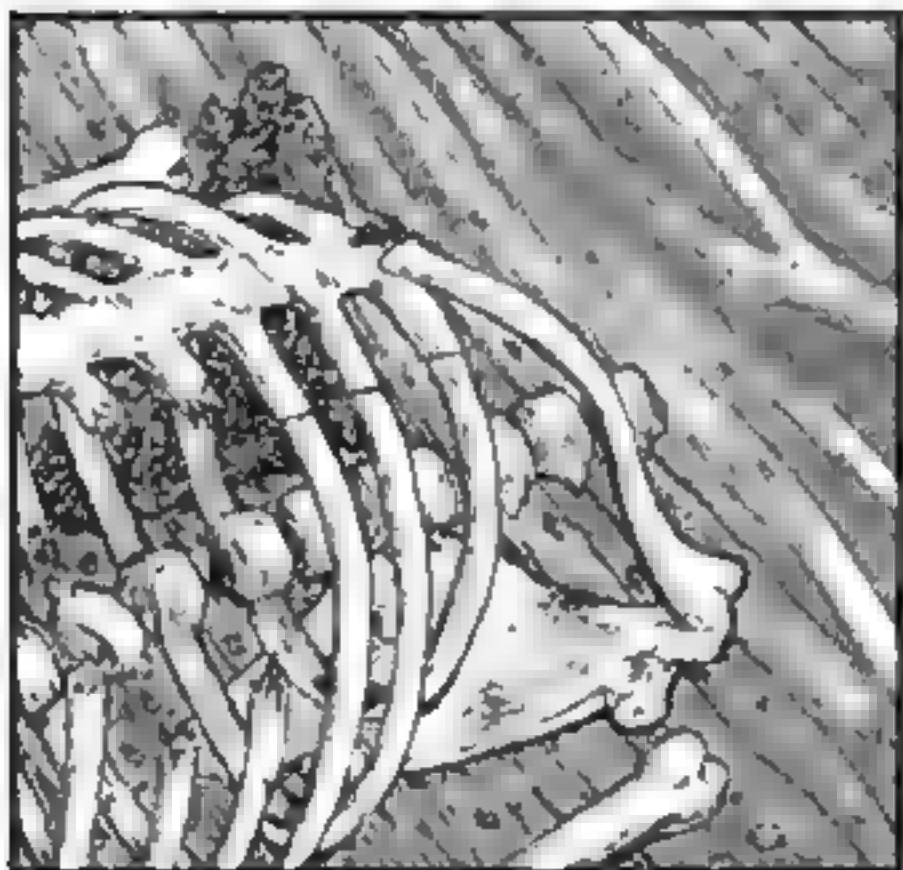
THE
SACRUM
AND COCCYX
ARE LEVEL
WITH THE
FINGERS...

THERE ARE
28 BONES
IN THE
FINGERS,
AND 24
RIBS.

TWO SETS OF
8 BONES MAKE
UP THE CARPAL
JOINT, AND TWO
SETS OF FIVE
BONES MAKE UP
THE METACARPALS.

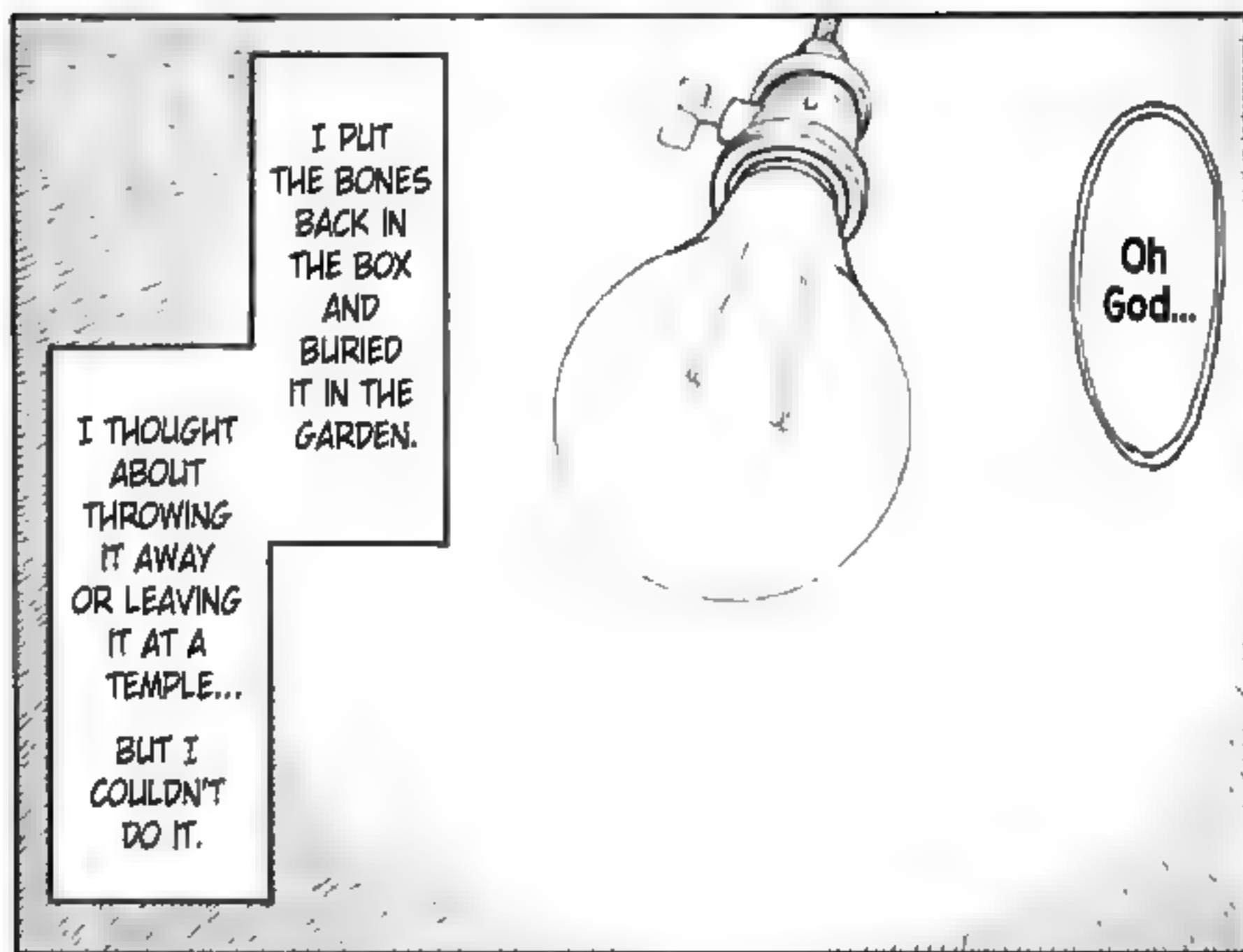
THERE ARE 12
BONES IN THE
THORACIC SPINE,
AND 10 BONES IN
THE LUMBAR
SPINE.





Is the skull...

All that remains



I PUT THE BONES BACK IN THE BOX AND BURIED IT IN THE GARDEN.

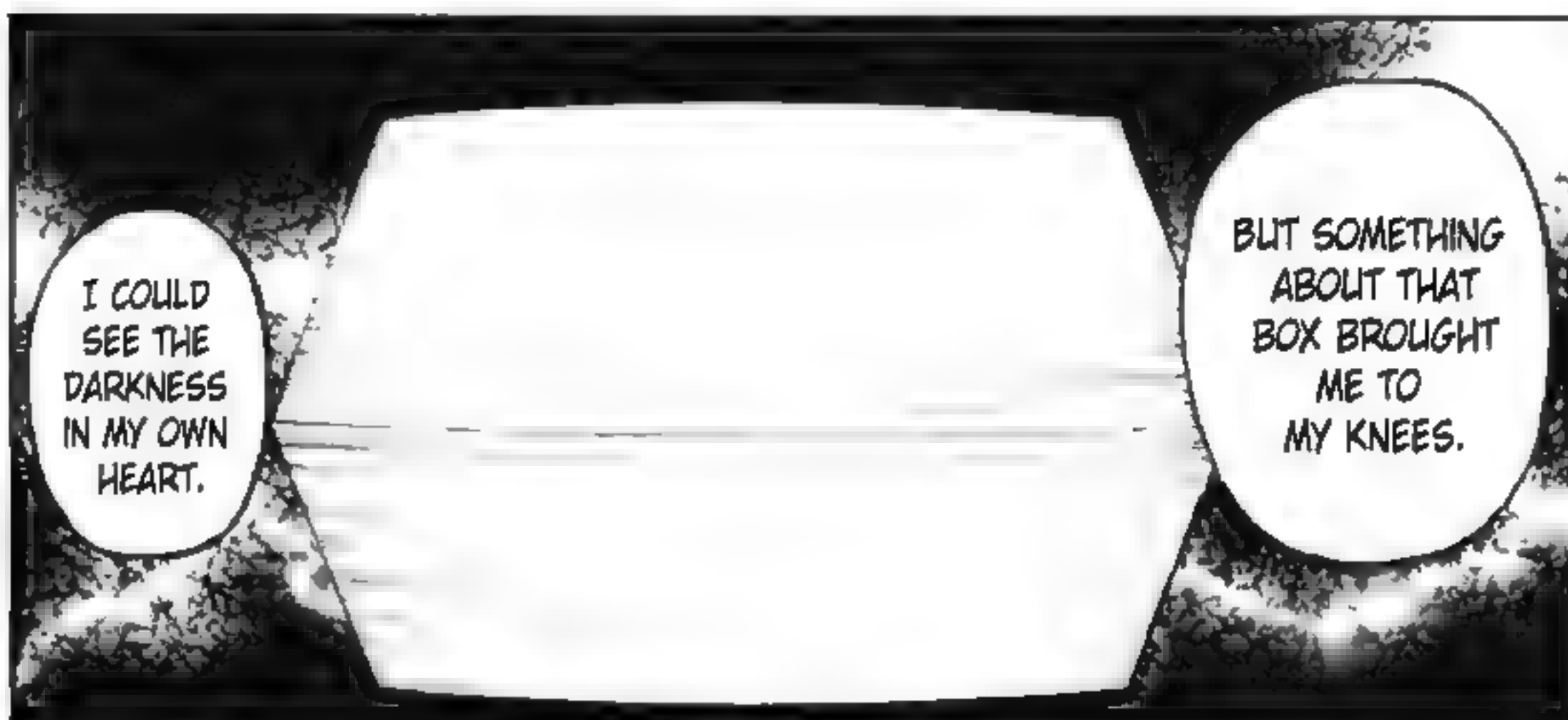
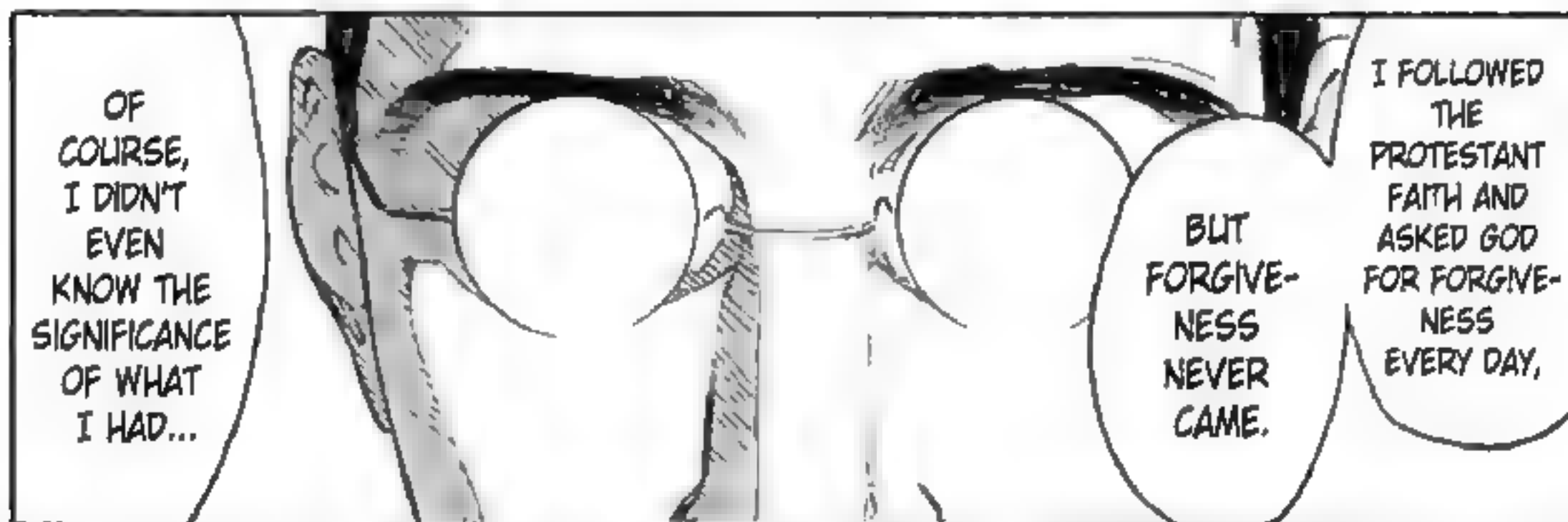
I THOUGHT ABOUT THROWING IT AWAY OR LEAVING IT AT A TEMPLE...

BUT I COULDN'T DO IT.

Oh God...



GULP





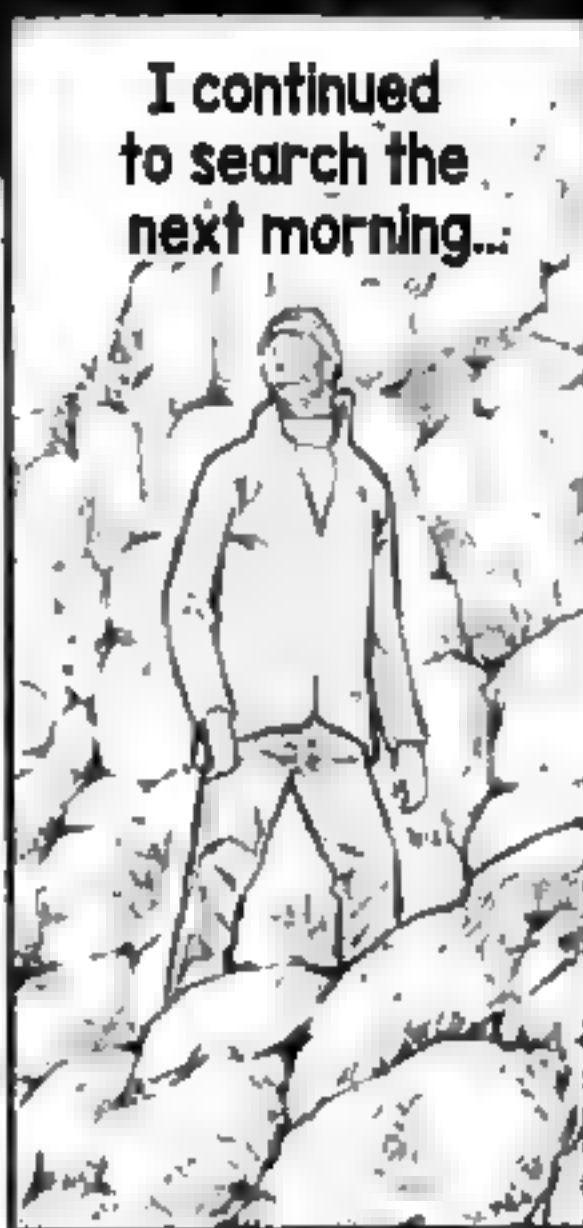
**It soon
consumed my
thoughts.**



**The
golden
skull...**



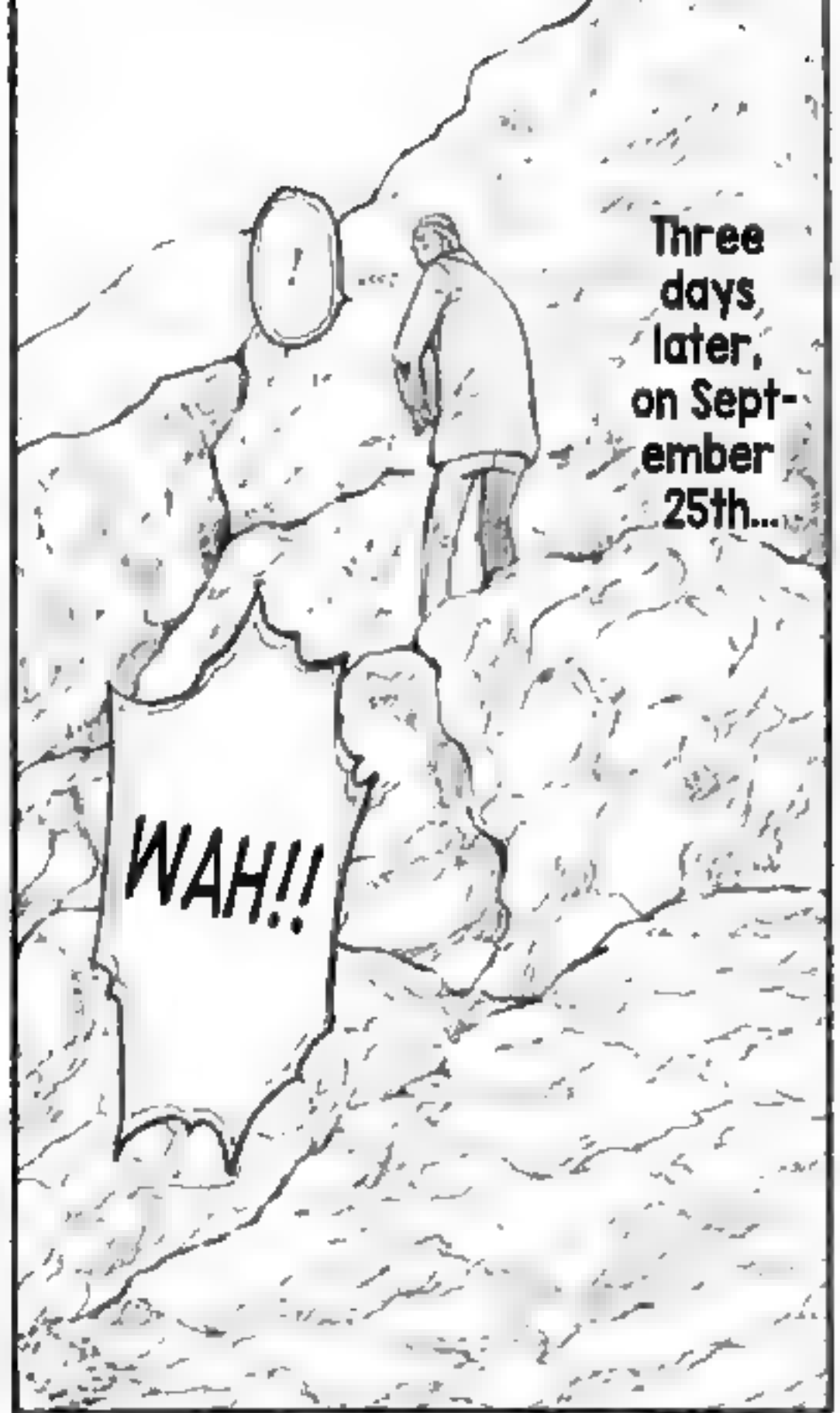
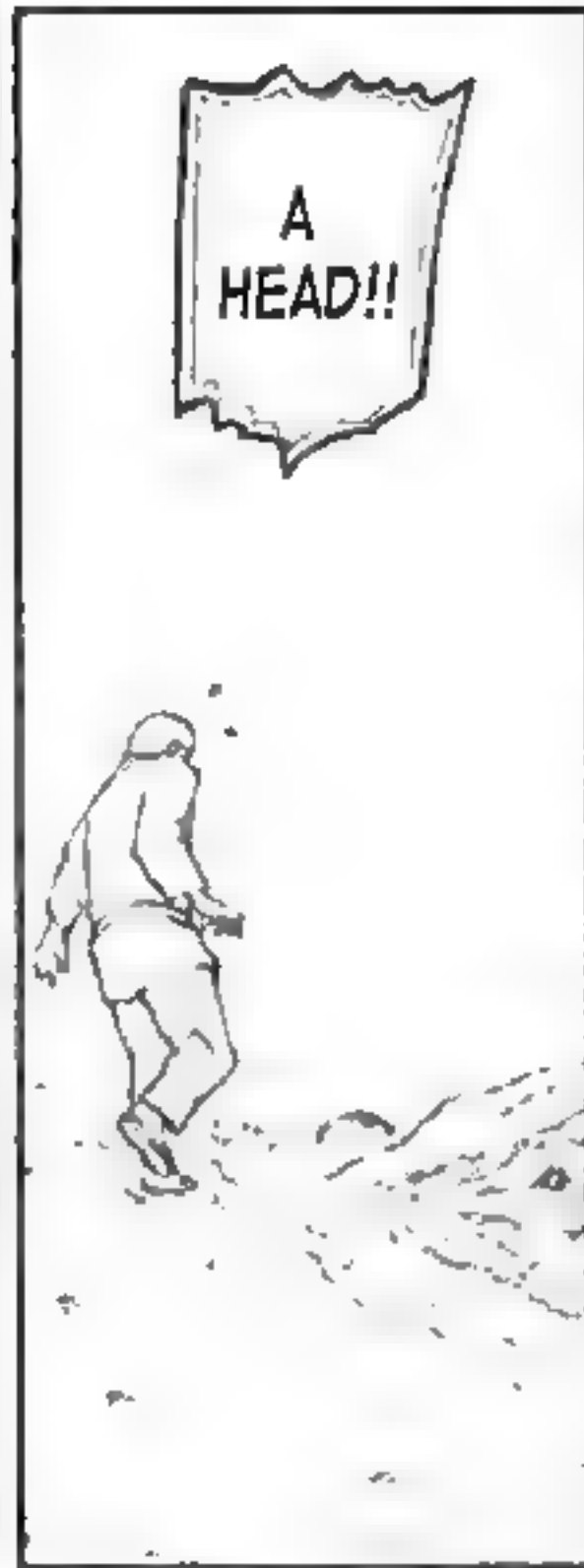
**I was driven
by the desire to
complete the
skeleton.**



**I continued
to search the
next morning...**



**That night,
I went to the beach
to look for it.**



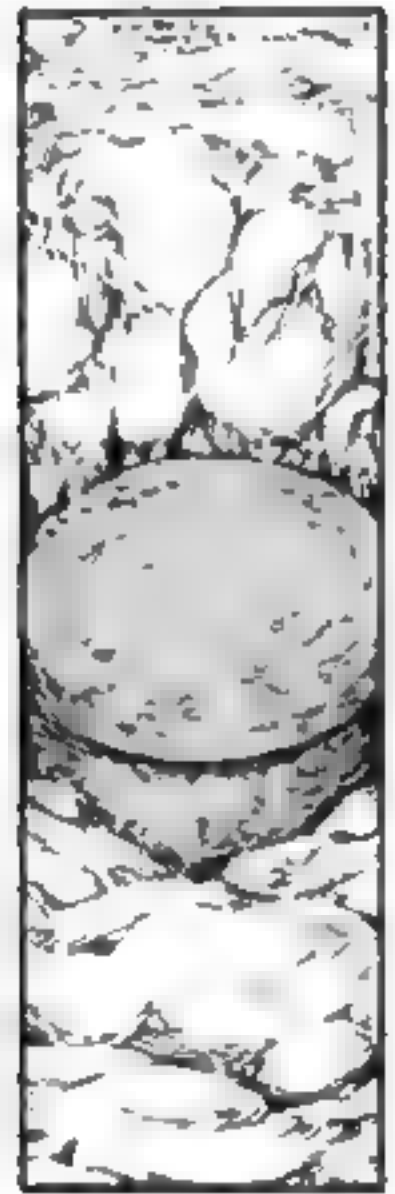


RYOU-
SAN,
YOU...



HERE
IT IS...

I TOOK
THE SKULL
HOME AND
BURIED IT
IN THE
GARDEN.



I CAN'T
DO IT.

OH...



Did
the god
come
back to
life?

So...
did it
work?

WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?



Well that's
embarr-
assing..

Eh!?
All that
drama for
nothing?



UNFOR-
TUNATE-
LY...

I DON'T
KNOW
HOW.



But the
"Golden Skull"
case and the
"Severed Head"
cases are
probably
unrelated...

If there's an
actual human
skull inside that
hatbox, then
at least two
of the Zushi
Bay heads
have been
recovered...



I wonder if
it's really
covered in
gold...?



HEY!
WHERE
ARE
YOU?!



SOME-
ONE'S
COMING!



SHUT UP!
I'M BUSY,
YOU
DUMBASS!!

I recogized
that big
hulking
body of
yours even
in the dark!



WHAT
HAP-
PENED,
BOSS?



WE CHECKED
THE WELL
LIKE
KYOLIGOKU
SAID...



WHAT
DID YOU
FIND?



FIRST
WE FOUND
THE BLOOD-
COVERED
STONE
FROM THE
GARDEN...

BUT
WHAT WE
FOUND
AFTER
THAT WAS
JUST
BIZARRE.

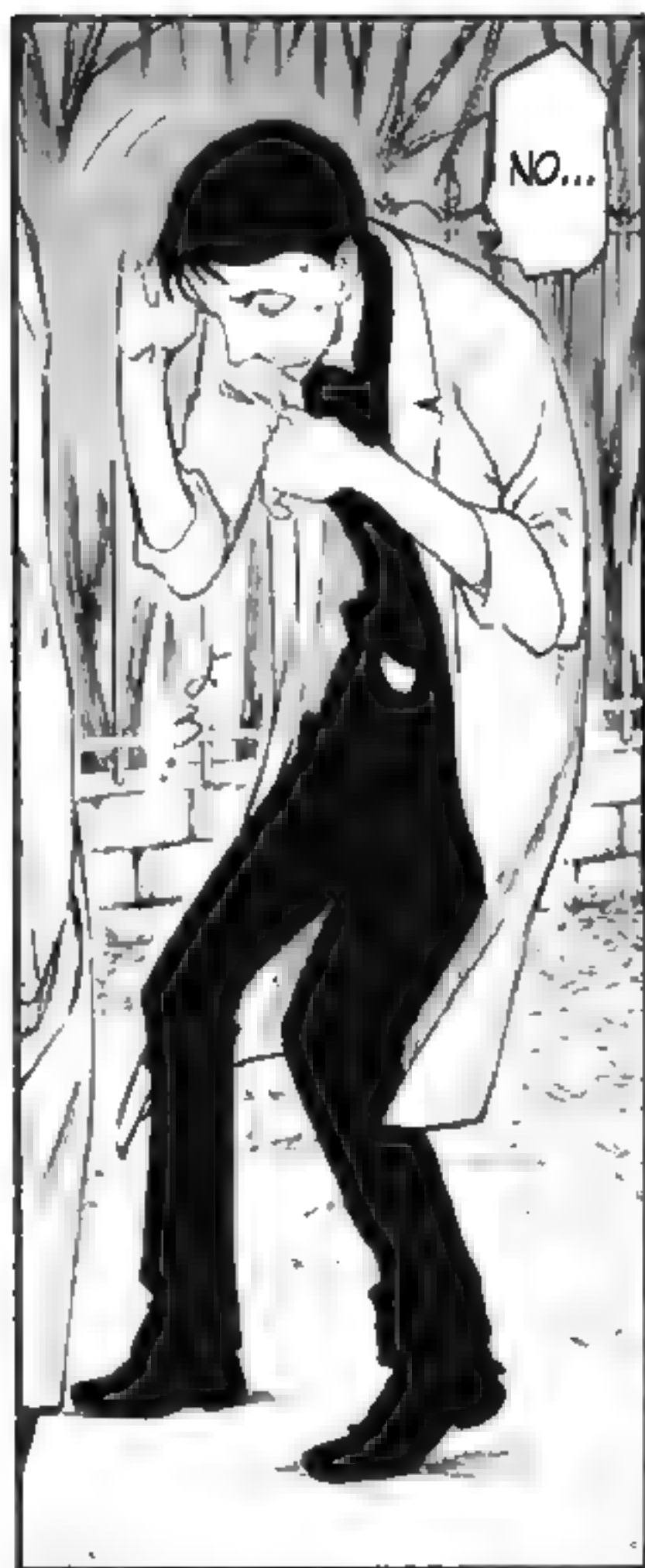


WE'VE
GOT
TROUBLE!





WE FOUND
THE
CORPSES
OF THREE
MEN, ALL
DRESSED
IN ARMY
UNIFORMS.



AKEMI-SAN
WAS JUST
HALLUCI-
NATING...
THERE'S NO
WAY THE
CORPSES COULD
EXIST IN THE
REAL WORLD!!



A
MURD-
ERER...





I TOLD
HER SHE
SHOULD
KILL THE
MAN IN HER
DREAM!!

I TOLD
HER...



COME
ON!

WE'RE ALL
GOING TO
THE PEACH
GARDEN
HOTEL TO
TALK TO KYOU-
GOKUDOU!



SHE WASN'T
JUST
PRETENDING
TO BE
CRAZY...

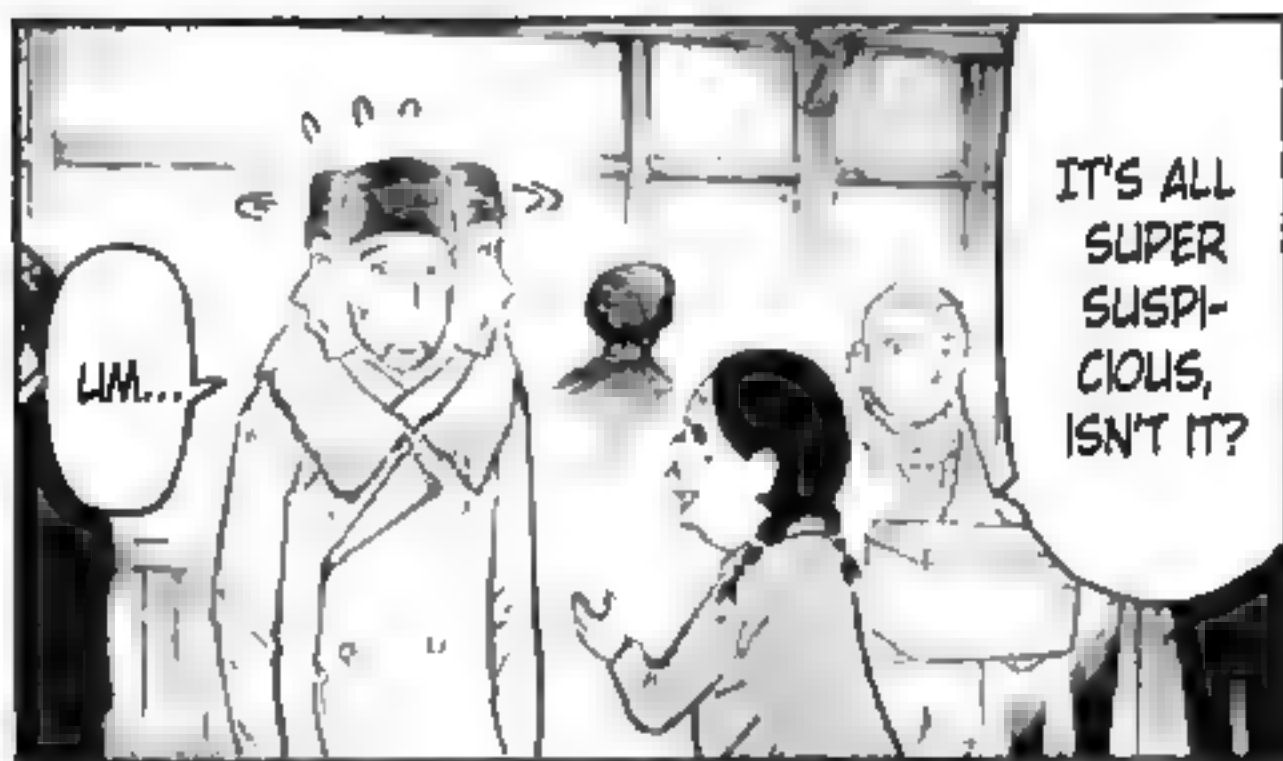
SHE WASN'T
DELUSIONAL...
SHE WASN'T
PSYCHOTIC...
SHE WASN'T
ON DRUGS...

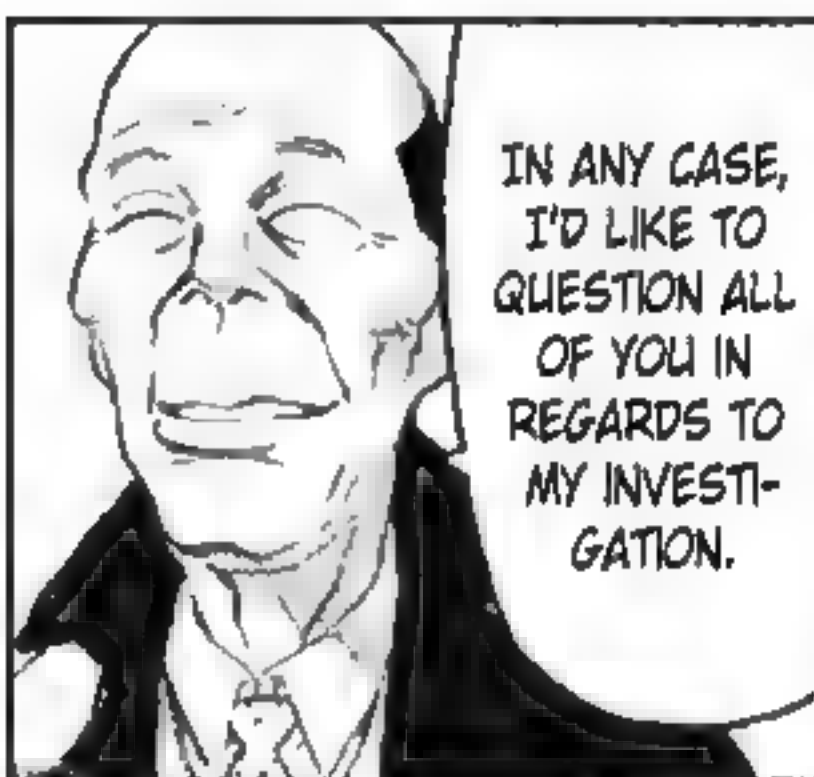


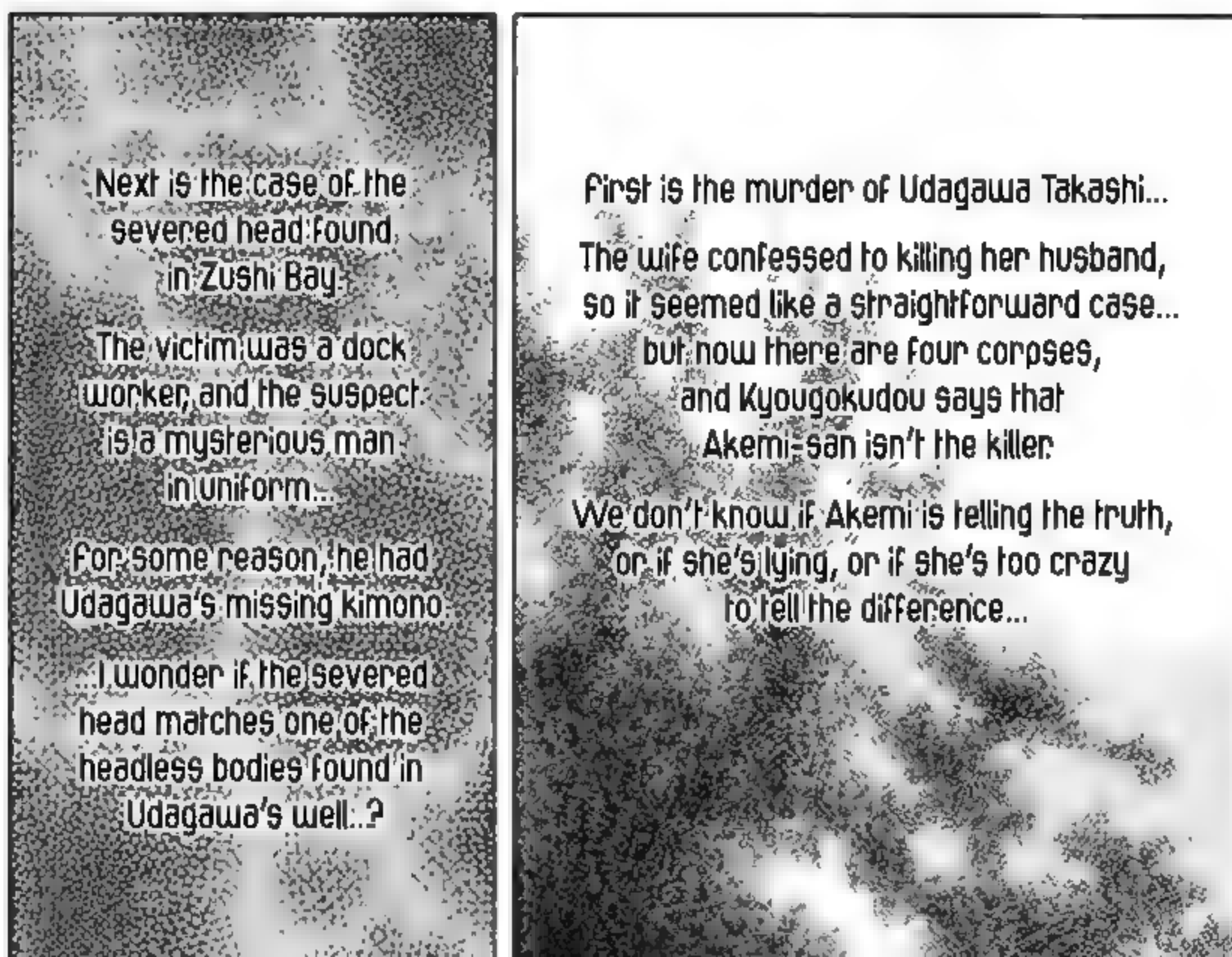
DROP
DEAD,
YOU
DIPSHIT!!

ehehe

Wow, you
should see
the looks on
your faces!







And then there's the group suicide case in Futagoyama...

Out of ten victims, eight are connected to Akemi-san's previous job at the Kamoda Liquor Company.

And the knife used in the incident was marked with a chrysanthemum crest - the same symbol used by a lot of right-wing political groups.

Then there's the golden skull case...

Some weird cult is collecting bones to resurrect a dead god? It's definitely fishy, but it doesn't seem related to the other deaths.

But it is rather suspicious that Pastor Shiraoka coincidentally discovered bones on two separate occasions.

But then the victim and the suspect would both be men in uniform...

And men in uniform are rare these days.



But then again,...

In that weird story Furuhashi-kun told us, it sounded like a Buddhist group was using skulls for some kind of ritual...



But Yamada Seishin was a Buddhist monk...

And this skull stuff seems like a Shinto cult...





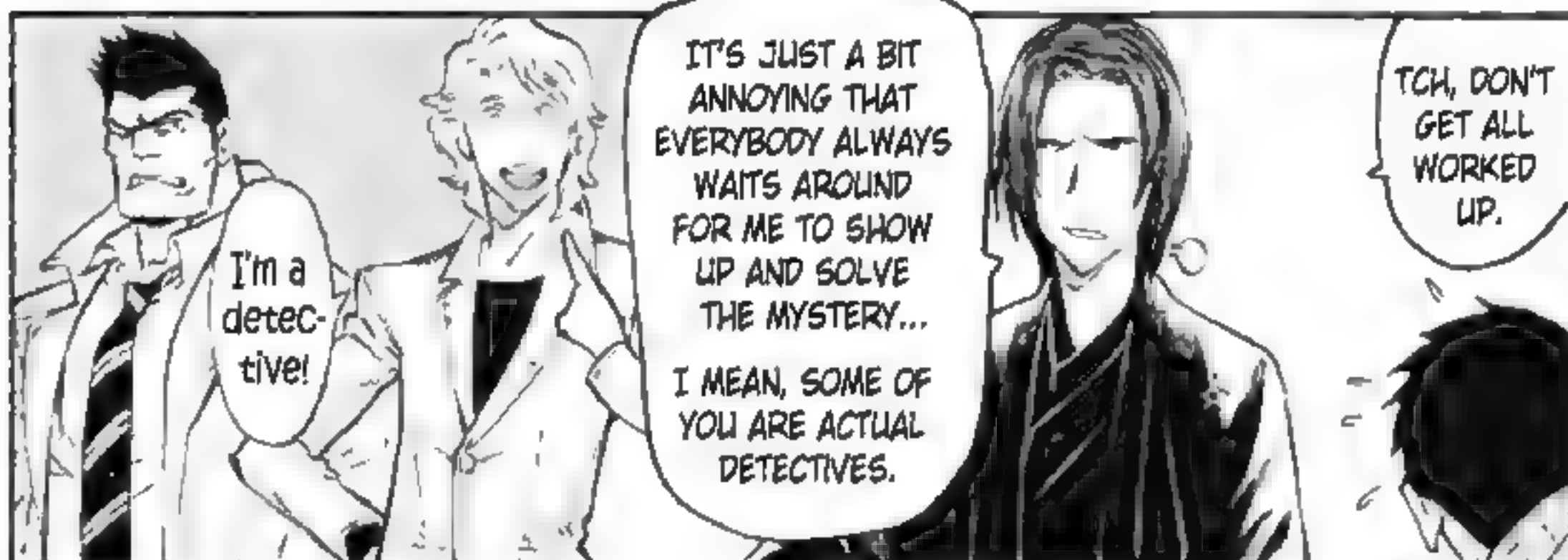


WELL,
SEKIGUCHI,
WHY DON'T
YOU TAKE
THE LEAD?

WHY
ME!?



THIS IS
QUITE A
CROWD...



I'm a
detec-
tive!

IT'S JUST A BIT
ANNOYING THAT
EVERYBODY ALWAYS
WAITS AROUND
FOR ME TO SHOW
UP AND SOLVE
THE MYSTERY...
I MEAN, SOME OF
YOU ARE ACTUAL
DETECTIVES.

TCH, DON'T
GET ALL
WORKED
UP.



FIRST,
WE NEED
TO GO UP
THERE.



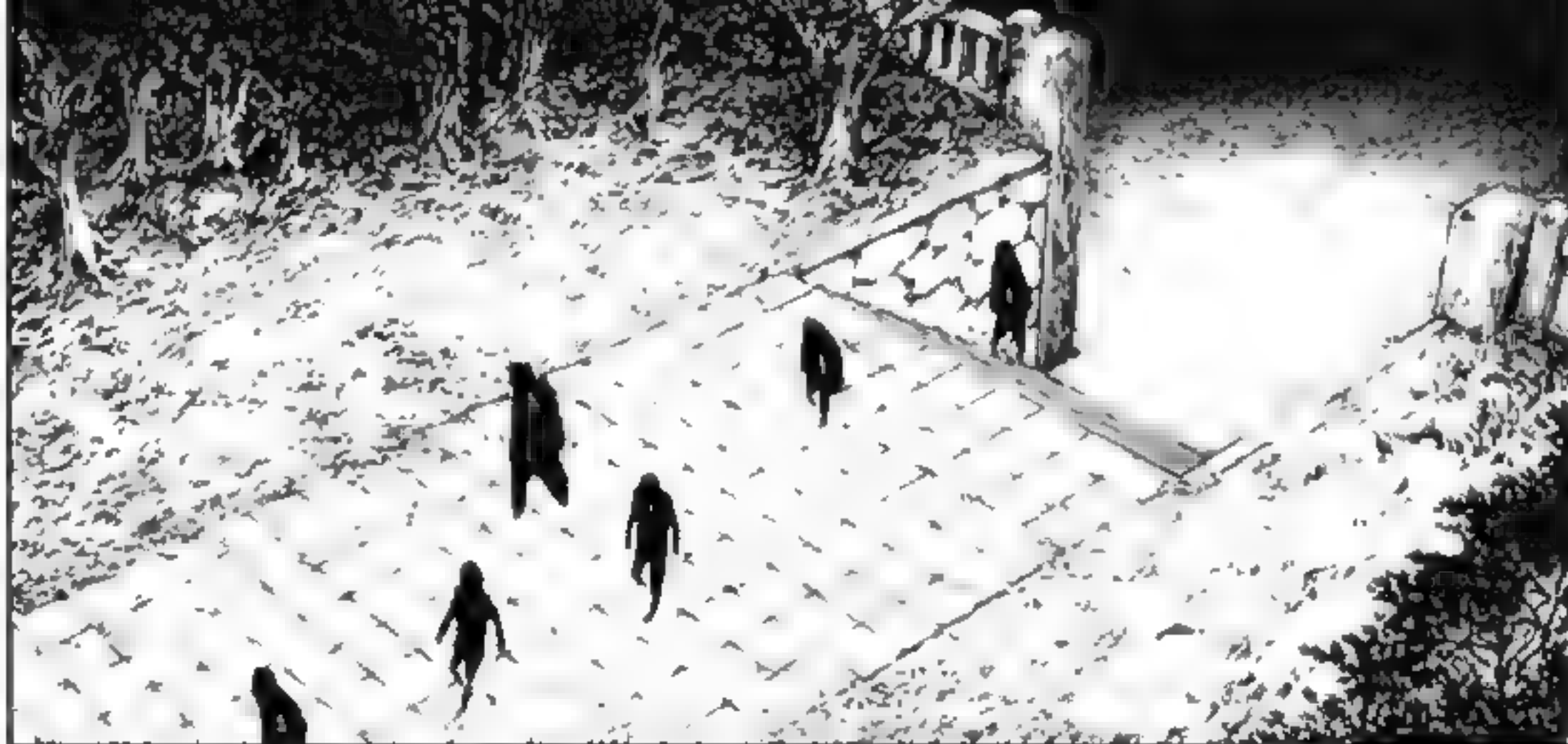
LET'S
JUST
GET
THIS
OVER
WITH.

WHATEVER,
WE'RE ALL IN
THE SAME
BOAT HERE.



Sign: Shoubouin Monju Temple







YOU SHOULD
HAVE
BROUGHT
THOSE BONES
HERE FROM
THE START.



YOU JUST
NEED TO
FOLLOW
YOUR
FAITH.

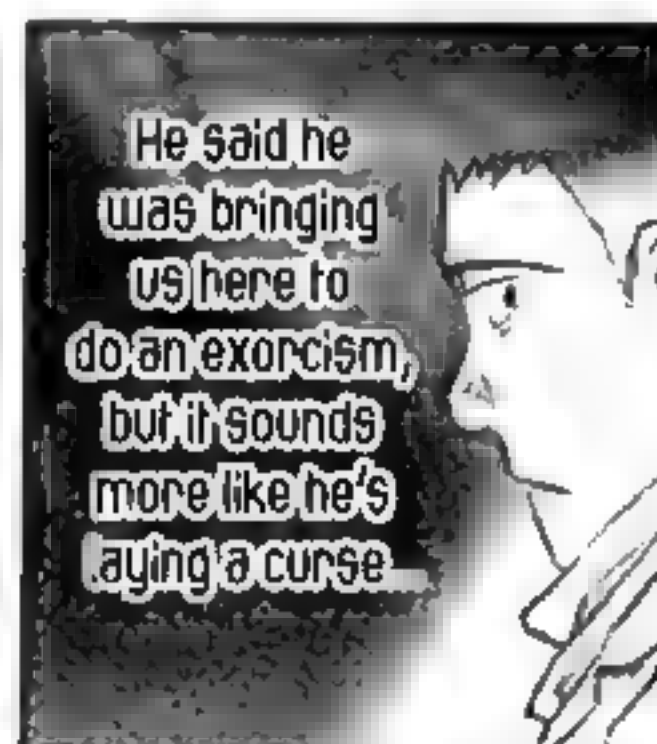
IT'S FINE.
YOU'RE A
CHRISTIAN,
RIGHT?



Y-YOU
...



THIS IS
CERTAINLY
A MORE
SUITABLE
PLACE FOR
THEM THAN
THE
GROUNDS
OF A
PROTESTANT
CHURCH.





NOTE Buddhist temples usually have a main worship hall where a statue of Buddha or another Buddhist saint is enshrined.





How does
Kyougoku-
dou
move so
quietly!?



Wait a
minute...

A
chysan-
themum
crest?



LOOK,
LAN-
TERNS!







OH?
SOUNDS INTER-
ESTING.

WHAT
SORT OF
BLACK
MAGIC?

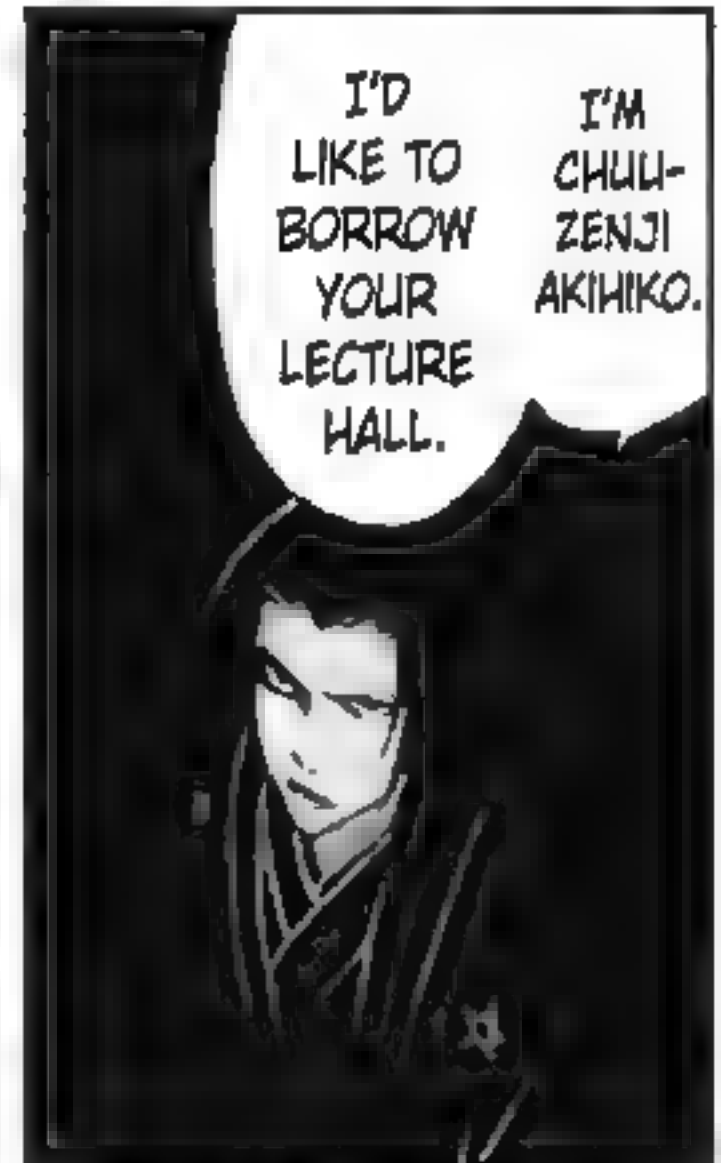
NOTE

Kyougoku literally says that he wants to perform some "left-handed" magic. For an explanation of Buddhist left-handed magic, see the chapter notes!



FOR WHAT
PURPOSE?

FOR A
BIT OF
BLACK
MAGIC.

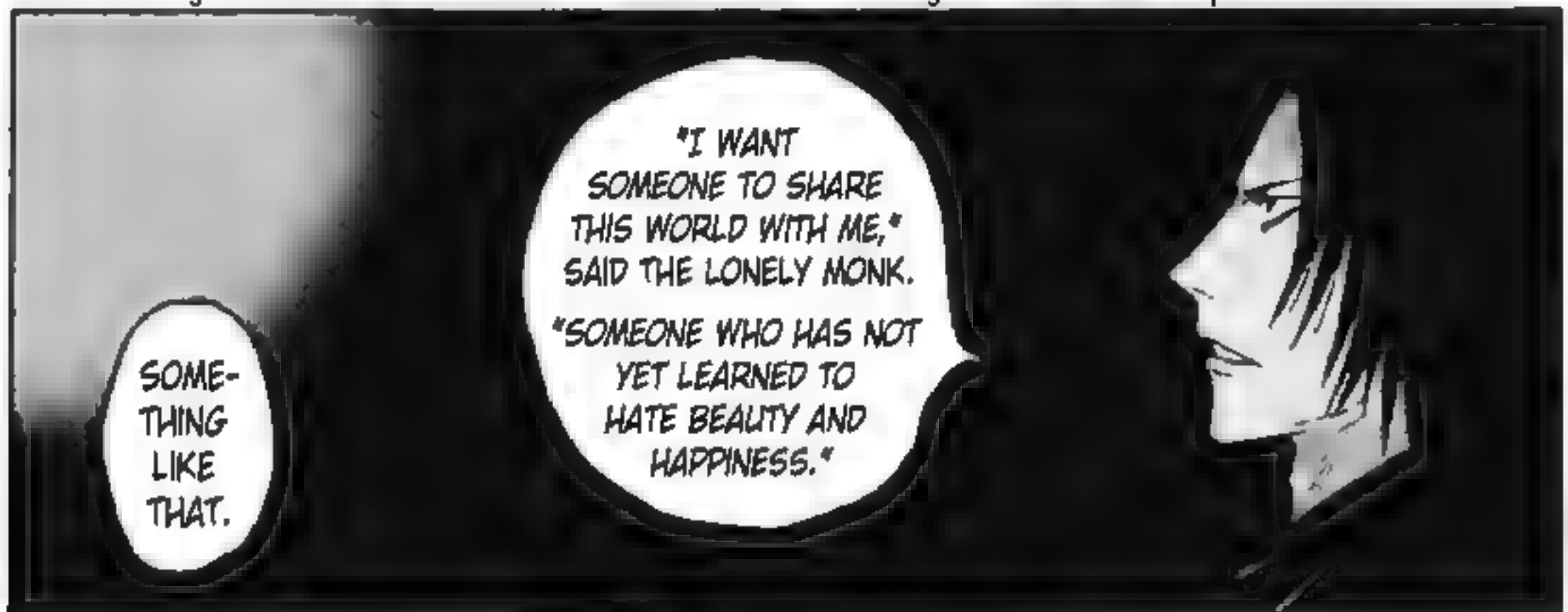


I'D
LIKE TO
BORROW
YOUR
LECTURE
HALL.

I'M
CHUJI-
ZENJI
AKIHIKO.

NOTE

Kyougoku is quoting the tale of Saigyō, the Japanese version of Frankenstein. Saigyō used a resurrection ritual to create a living creature from the bones of the dead... but it didn't go well. See the chapter notes for details.



SOME-
THING
LIKE
THAT.

"I WANT
SOMEONE TO SHARE
THIS WORLD WITH ME,"
SAID THE LONELY MONK.
"SOMEONE WHO HAS NOT
YET LEARNED TO
HATE BEAUTY AND
HAPPINESS."



ALRIGHT
THEN.



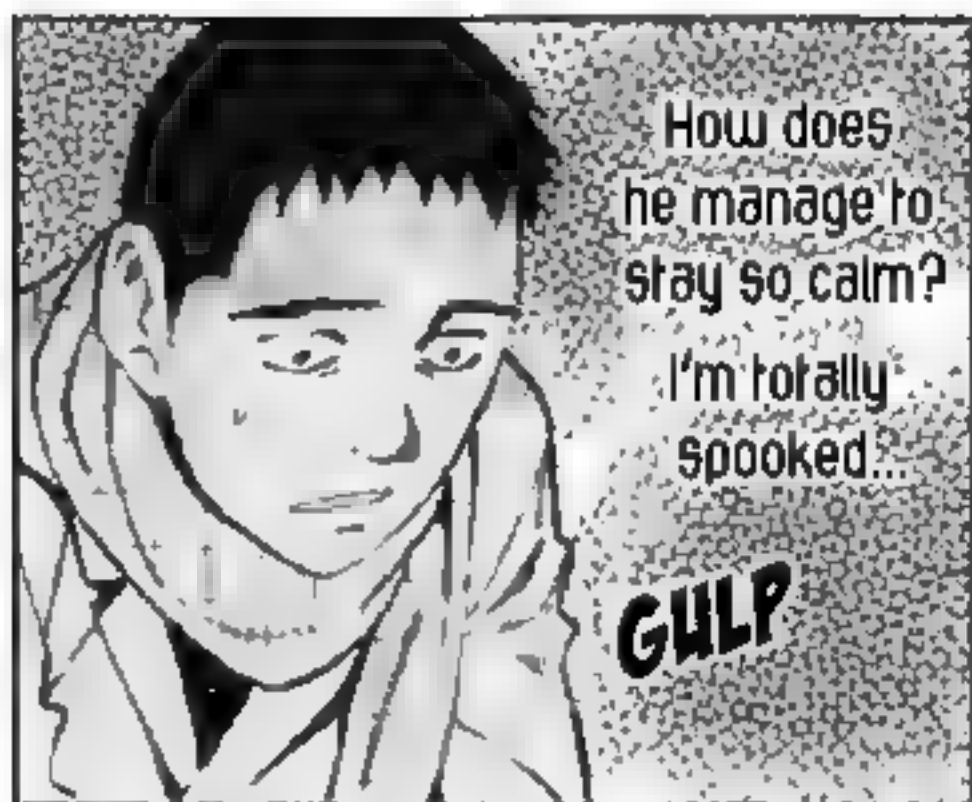
LET'S
SEE THIS
MAGIC.



...VERY
WELL,
GO
AHEAD.

THE "TALE
OF SAIGYO?"
DO YOU
REALLY KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
GETTING
INTO?









NOTE Arsenic is one of the ingredients in Saigyo's resurrection spell.





**BUT...
BUT I...**



**I...
I DON'T...**

**FURUHATA-
KUN...
IT'S AL-
RIGHT...**







HE WANTED
TO DO IT, BUT
HE COULDN'T...

ISN'T
THAT RIGHT,
SHIRAOKA-
SAN?

NAMELY,
HE
COULDN'T
GET THE
ARSENIC.

AND
BECAUSE
HE LACKED
THE
REQUIRED
SUPPLIES.



BUT...
RYOU-
SAN...



SO...

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO
DO THIS ON
YOUR OWN.

BUT
I'VE COME
PREPARED
...



THE REST OF
THE WORLD
WILL NEVER
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENS
HERE
TONIGHT.

DON'T
WORRY...



R-
REALLY
?



F-
FUN!?

AND
I'M
HAVING
FUN.

SHIRAOKA-
SAN HAS
BEEN
WAITING
30 YEARS
FOR THIS...

JUST
BE QUIET
AND WATCH,
SEKIGUCHI-
KUN.

W-WAIT,
KYOUGOKUDOU,
CAN YOU
REALLY RAISE
THE DEAD...?

I'M REALLY
LOOKING
FORWARD
TO MEETING
SOMEONE
WHO'S COME
BACK FROM
THE DEAD.

AREN'T
YOU?

OH
YES.

huff

huff

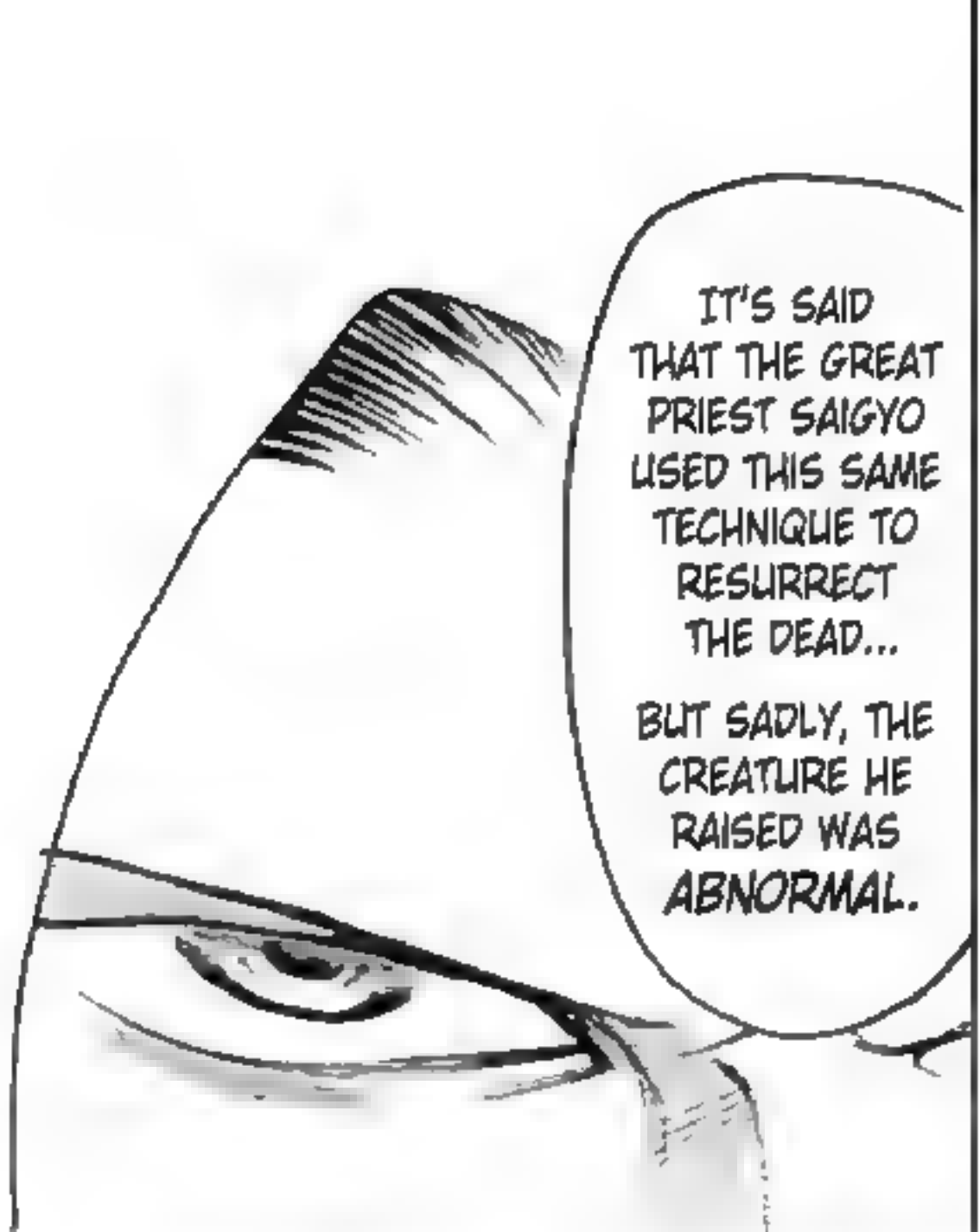
huff

huff

huff



IT LOOKED
HUMAN,
BUT IT WAS
DEATHLY
PALE AND
IT SPOKE
IN A HIGH,
REEDY
VOICE...



IT'S SAID
THAT THE GREAT
PRIEST SAIGYO
USED THIS SAME
TECHNIQUE TO
RESURRECT
THE DEAD...

BUT SADLY, THE
CREATURE HE
RAISED WAS
ABNORMAL.



SHUDDER



BUT
WORST
OF ALL,
IT LACKED
A HUMAN
SOUL.



WHAT DO
YOU THINK
SAIGYO
DID NEXT,
SEKIGUCHI-
KUN?



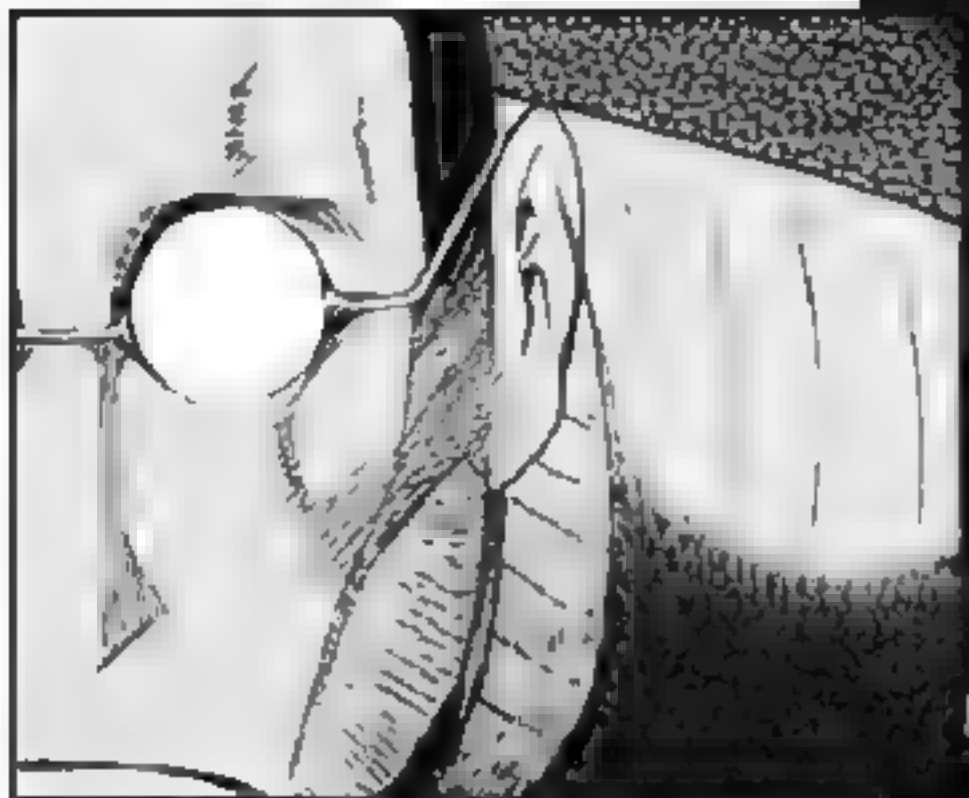
THAT'S RIGHT.
SAIGYO HAD
PERFORMED THE
SPELL PERFECTLY, BUT
HIS RITUAL FAILED.
AND SO SAIGYO WENT
TO HIS MENTOR, THE
SORCEROR MINAMOTO
NO MORONAKA...
BUT MORONAKA
ADMONISHED HIM FOR
HIS FOOLISHNESS.



IT HAD...
NO SOUL?



HUH?
I DON'T
KNOW...



SAIGYO TOOK
THE MONSTER
HE'D RAISED
INTO THE
MOUNTAINS AND
ABANDONED
IT THERE.



IT WILL
BECOME A
SOULLESS
MONSTER!?

IF...

IF I
RAISE
THIS
SKELE-
TON...

IRRES-
PONSIBLE,
WASN'T
HE?



WHAT
DID YOU
EXPECT?

THIS IS
BLACK MAGIC,
AFTER ALL.

INDEED.
THOSE ARE
MERELY BONES...
THE FLAME OF
THE SOUL
HAS BEEN
EXTINGUISHED.



BUT...
BUT YOU
SAID IT WAS
POSSIBLE TO
BRING BACK
THE DEAD...

WH-WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING!?



ONMYOUDOU IS DIFFERENT FROM THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF "BLACK MAGIC."

HIS SOUL WAS FINE.

WH-WHAT ABOUT HIS SOUL?



THEY'RE DIFFERENT RELIGIONS.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

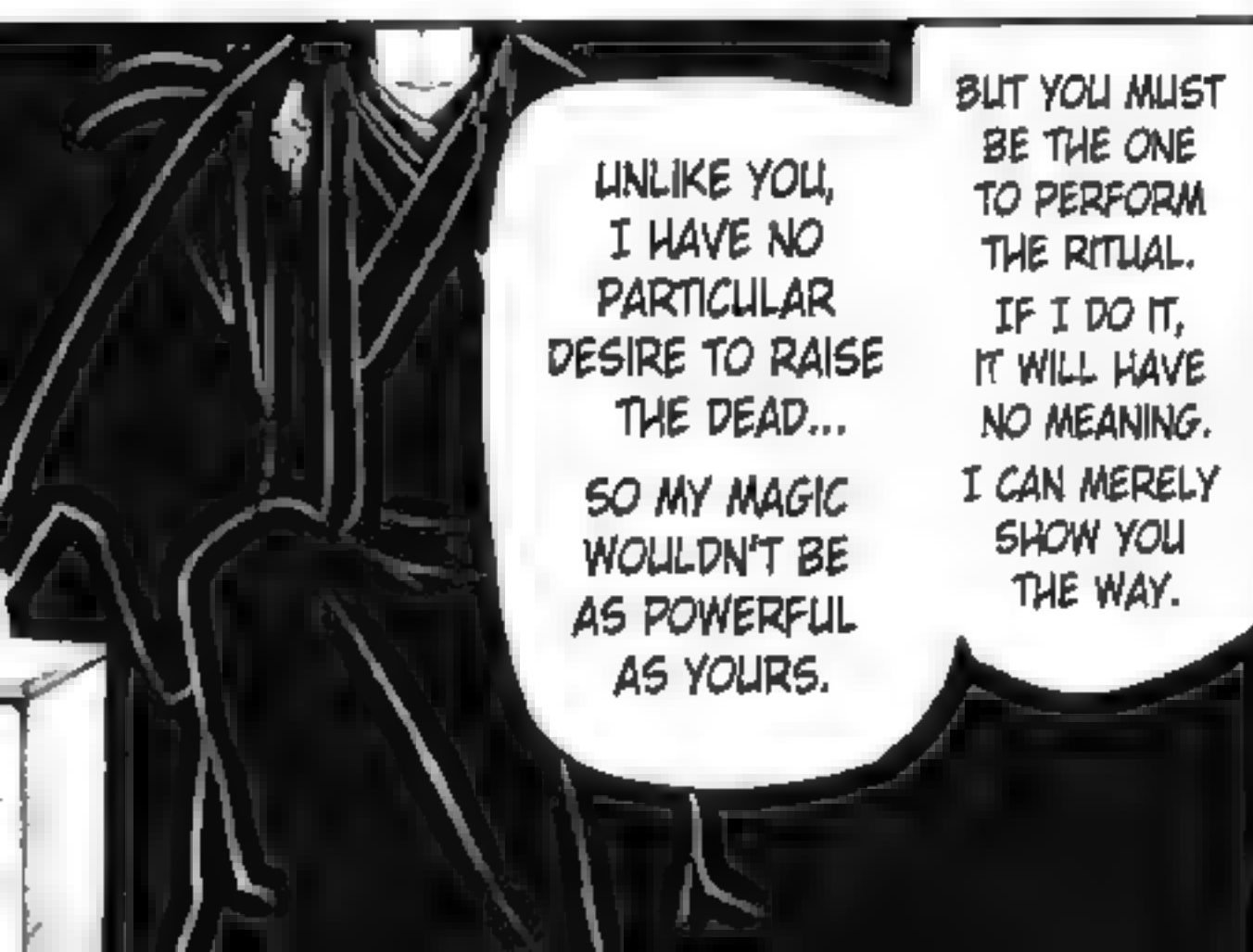


IT IS.
WHEN THE GREAT ONMYOUDOU ABE NO SEIMEI WAS KILLED AND DECAPITATED, HIS MASTER, THE CHINESE SAGE HAKUDOU, COLLECTED HIS BONES AND USED A RITUAL OF RESURRECTION TO BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE.



I'M SORRY, SHIRO-O-KA-SAN.

TH-THEN PLEASE DO THE ONMYOUDOU RITUAL!!



UNLIKE YOU, I HAVE NO PARTICULAR DESIRE TO RAISE THE DEAD... SO MY MAGIC WOULDN'T BE AS POWERFUL AS YOURS.

BUT YOU MUST BE THE ONE TO PERFORM THE RITUAL. IF I DO IT, IT WILL HAVE NO MEANING. I CAN MERELY SHOW YOU THE WAY.



THE PRINCIPAL GOD OF ONMYOUDOU, TAIZAN FUKUN, IS EQUIVALENT TO THE TAOIST GOD DONGYUE DADI.

HE GOVERNS THE LIFE AND DEATH OF HUMAN BEINGS.

SO WHILE ONMYOUDOU CONTAINS RITUALS THAT ARE INTENDED TO CALL BACK THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD, THEY AREN'T CONSIDERED "DARK" OR "SINISTER."



I CAN HELP YOU,
BUT THIS WON'T
WORK IF YOU LACK
THE NECESSARY
RESOLVE.



THE FIRST
STEP IS TO
ASSEMBLE THE
BONES INTO A
HUMAN SHAPE
AND CONNECT
THEM WITH
YARN OR
STRING.

BUT IF
YOU WANT
TO PERFORM
THE RITUAL OF
RESSURECTION,
FIRST YOU
MUST KNOW TO
WHOM THESE
BONES BELONG.

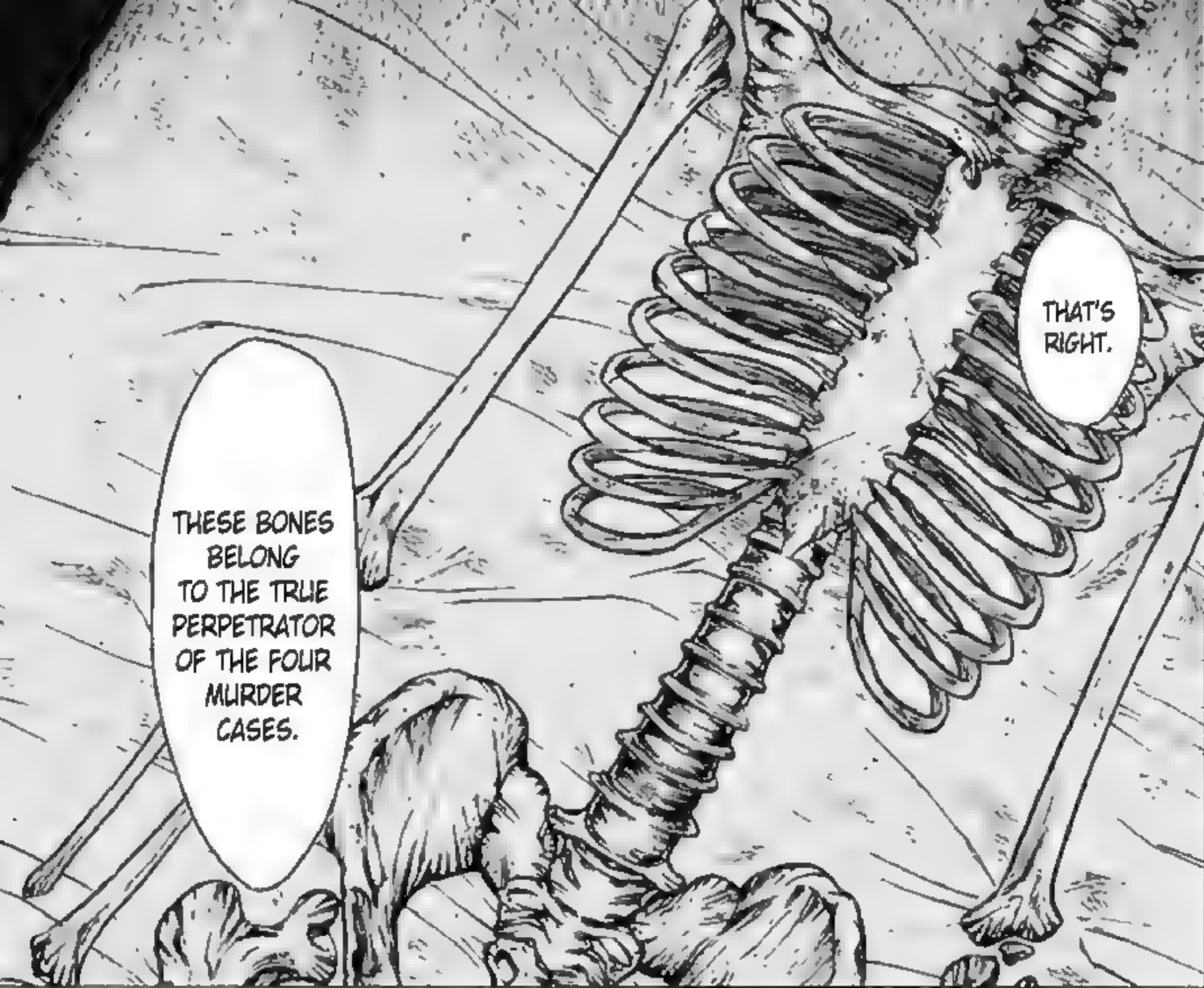
WH-
WHO
THEY
BELONG
TO?

THEY
INTENDED TO
RESTORE
LIFE IN
BOTH BODY
AND SPIRIT.

THE SHINTO
PRIESTS IN
DIRTY ROBES
THAT YOU SAW
AS A CHILD
WERE TRYING
TO RAISE
THESE
BONES.

I...
I DON'T
KNOW IF I
REALLY WANT
TO DO THIS
ANYMORE...

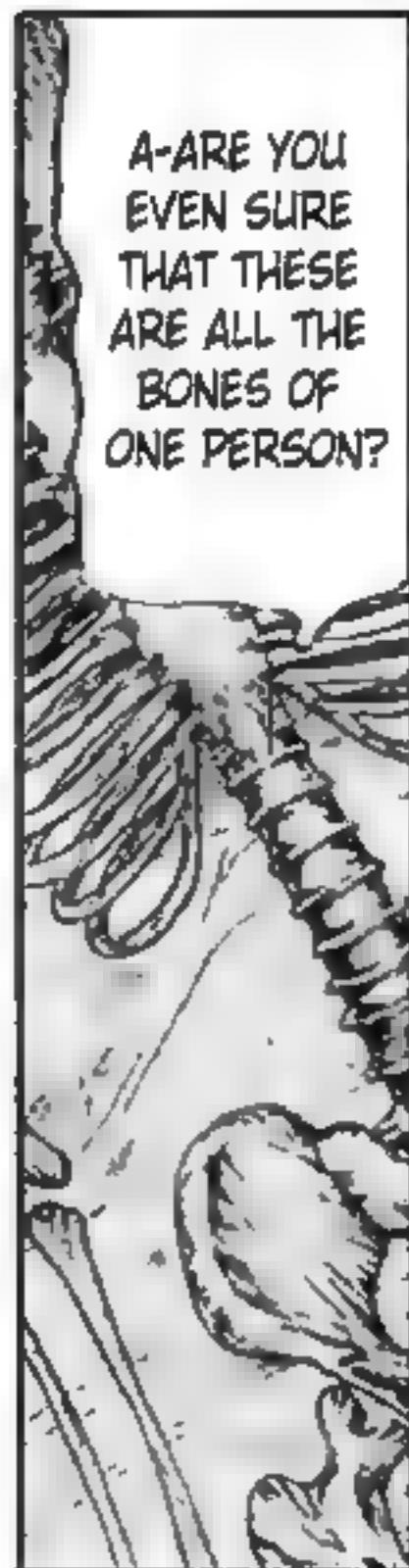
I DON'T
WANT TO
CREATE A
MONSTER!



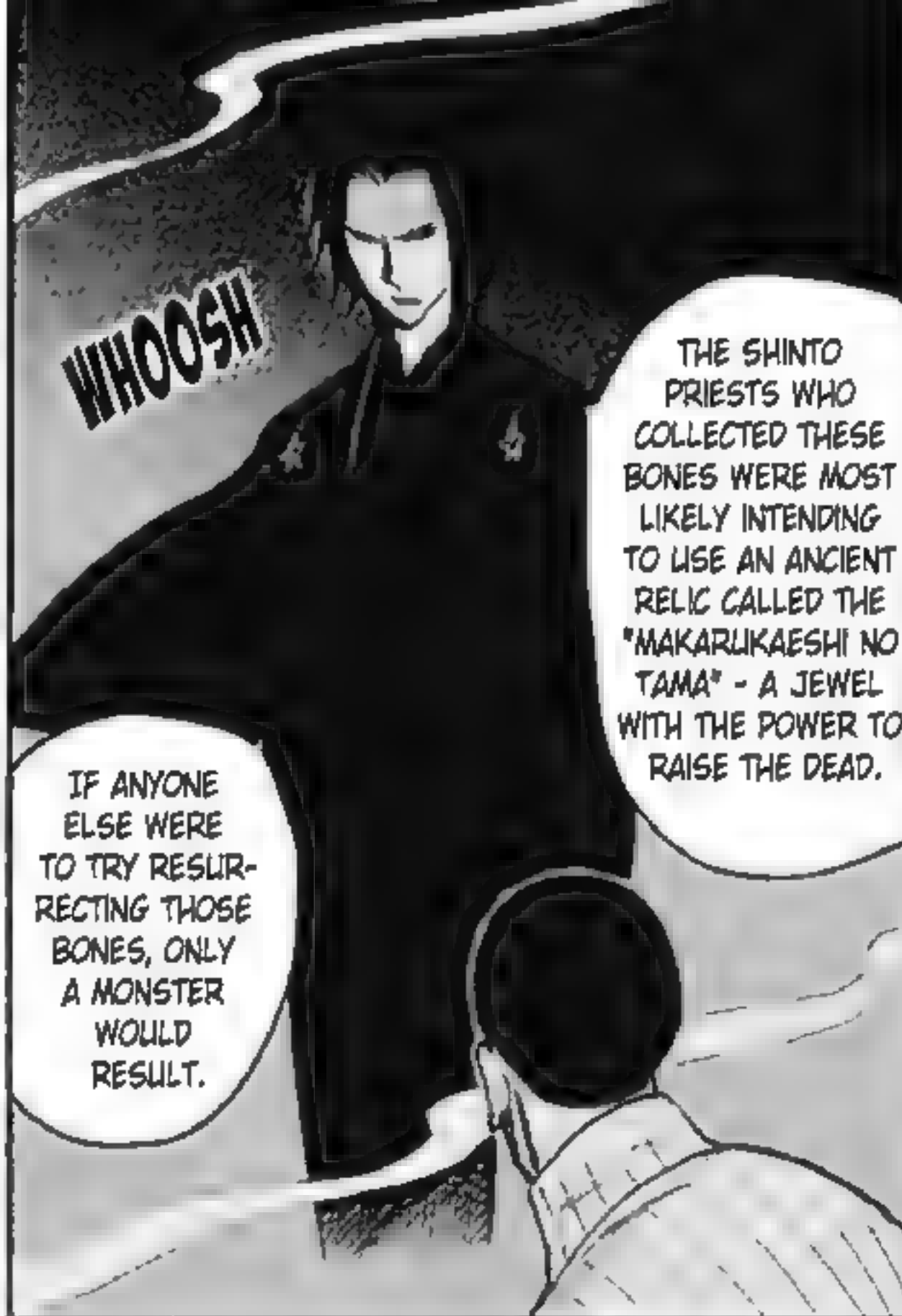
The bones...
are the
criminal...!?

UNTIL THE
BONES ARE
ASSEMBLED,
THESE
SENSELESS
KILLINGS
WILL NEVER
END.

KYOLIGOKU-
DOU...
WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING!?



A-ARE YOU
EVEN SURE
THAT THESE
ARE ALL THE
BONES OF
ONE PERSON?



WHOOSH

IF ANYONE
ELSE WERE
TO TRY RESUR-
RECTING THOSE
BONES, ONLY
A MONSTER
WOULD
RESULT.

THE SHINTO
PRIESTS WHO
COLLECTED THESE
BONES WERE MOST
LIKELY INTENDING
TO USE AN ANCIENT
RELIC CALLED THE
"MAKARUKAESHI NO
TAMA" - A JEWEL
WITH THE POWER TO
RAISE THE DEAD.



TAP

THERE ARE
MANY SECRET
RITUALS OF
RESURRECTION,
BUT THEY
AREN'T ALL
THE SAME.



BELONGS
TO SOME-
ONE
ELSE?

THE
HEAD
...



THEY
AREN'T.

THE
HEAD
BELONGS
TO
SOMEONE
ELSE.



THE
PRESEVATION
OF THE
SELF.

THAT'S
ALL THAT
REALLY
MATTERS.



IT'S NOT
ENOUGH
TO MERELY
RAISE
THE DEAD,
IS IT?

THE
IMPORTANT
THING IS
THE PRESER-
VATION OF
CONSCIOUS-
NESS.



CLATTER



COLLAPSE



THEN...
WHO DO
THESE
BONES
BELONG
TO?



THE OWNER
OF THESE
BONES IS
CALLED
TAKEMINAKATA-
TOMI-NO-
MIKOTO.



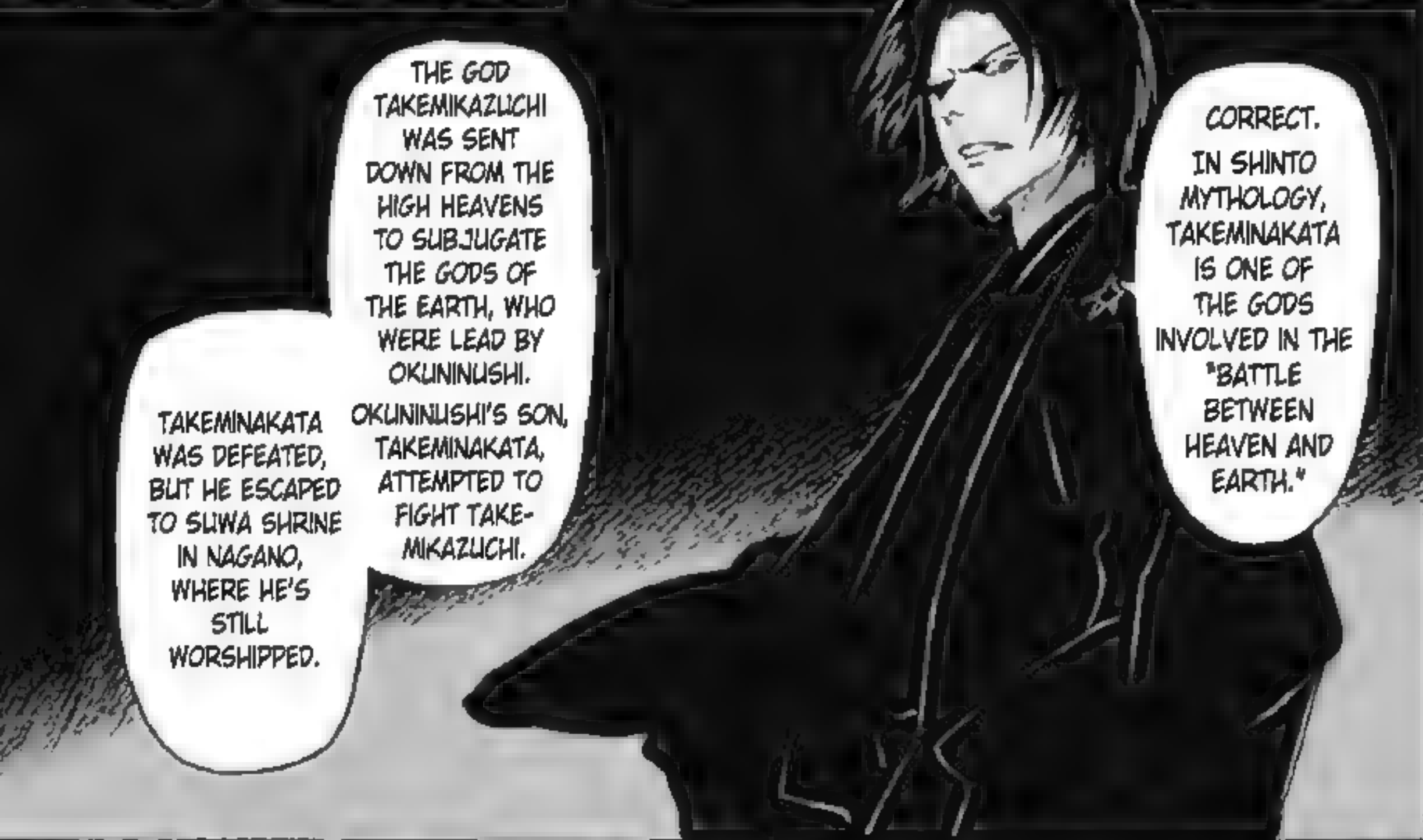
THAT'S
THE NAME
OF A
SHINTO
GOD,
RIGHT!?



OI,
KYOU-
GOKU!



TAKE-
WHAT
...!?
WHO IS
THAT!?



THE GOD
TAKEMIKAZUCHI
WAS SENT
DOWN FROM THE
HIGH HEAVENS
TO SUBJUGATE
THE GODS OF
THE EARTH, WHO
WERE LEAD BY
OKUNINUSHI.

OKUNINUSHI'S SON,
TAKEMINAKATA,
ATTEMPTED TO
FIGHT TAKE-
MIKAZUCHI.

CORRECT.
IN SHINTO
MYTHOLOGY,
TAKEMINAKATA
IS ONE OF
THE GODS
INVOLVED IN THE
"BATTLE
BETWEEN
HEAVEN AND
EARTH."

TAKEMINAKATA
WAS DEFEATED,
BUT HE ESCAPED
TO SUWA SHRINE
IN NAGANO,
WHERE HE'S
STILL
WORSHIPPED.



HUH?



THAT'S
THE
CAUSE OF
THESE
INCIDENTS.

IN-
DEED.



IT'S SAID
THAT HE'S
HAD A
GRUDGE
AGAINST
THE GODS
OF HEAVEN
EVER
SINCE...

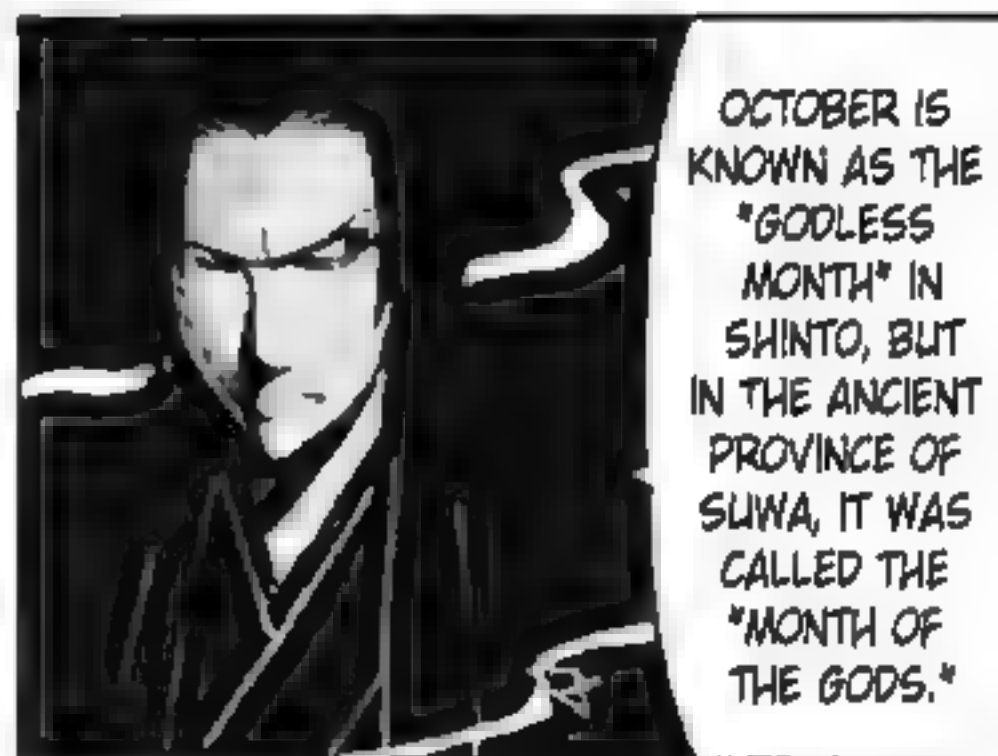


YEAH, I'VE
HEARD THE
STORY.
TAKE-
MIKAZUCHI
RIPPED HIS
ARM OFF
OR SOME-
THING.



SO OCTOBER IS THE "MONTH OF THE GODS" IN IZUMO, BUT THE "GODLESS MONTH" EVERYWHERE ELSE.

YES. EVERY YEAR, ALL EIGHT MILLION GODS OF JAPAN GATHER IN IZUMO IN OCTOBER.



OCTOBER IS KNOWN AS THE "GODLESS MONTH" IN SHINTO, BUT IN THE ANCIENT PROVINCE OF SUWA, IT WAS CALLED THE "MONTH OF THE GODS."



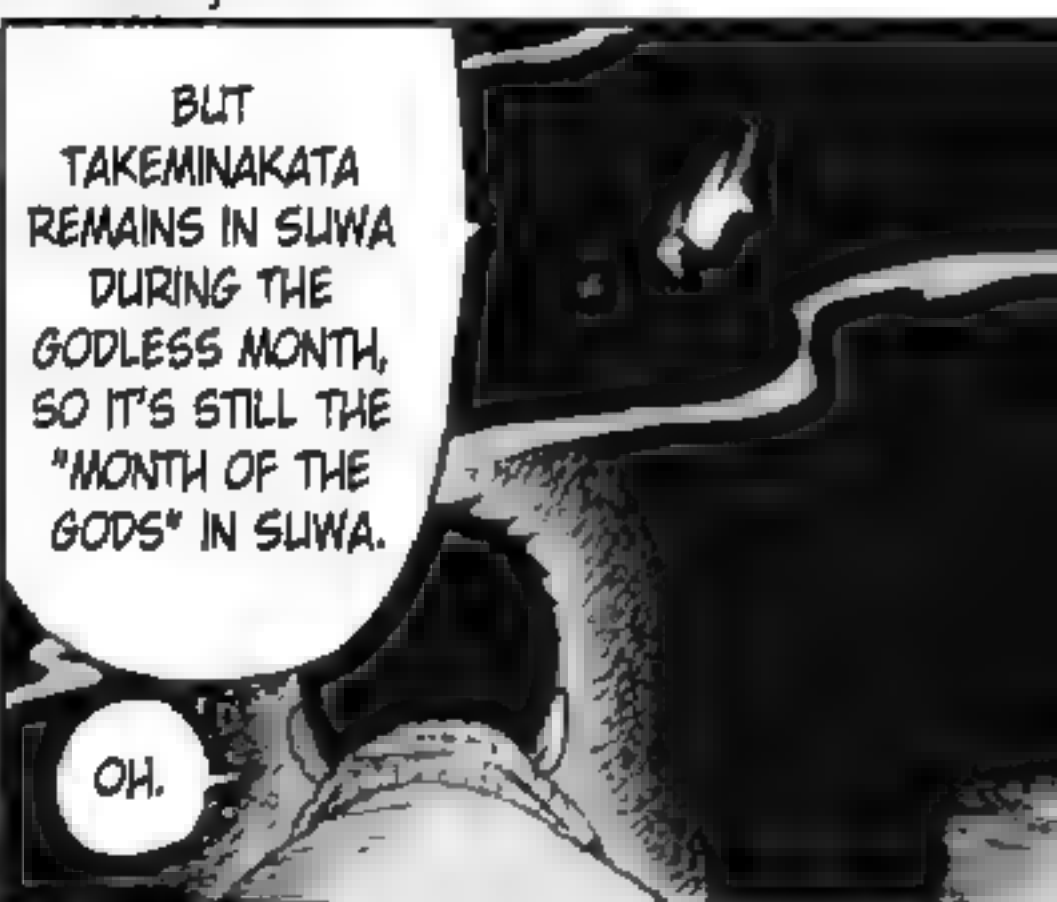
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GODS IN IZUMO?

NOTE Suwa is part of modern-day Nagano prefecture, which is where Akemi was born. Izumo is far to the southwest of Suwa, closer to Hiroshima. So the gods of Suwa refuse to join the others in Izumo.



SO IN SUWA, A VERY OLD FORM OF THE SHINTO RELIGION COEXISTS ALONGSIDE MAINSTREAM SHINTO.

BEFORE THE WARLORD TAKEDA SHINGEN TOOK OVER SUWA, IT WAS TREATED ALMOST LIKE A SEPARATE COUNTRY FROM THE REST OF JAPAN.



BUT TAKEMINAKATA REMAINS IN SUWA DURING THE GODLESS MONTH, SO IT'S STILL THE "MONTH OF THE GODS" IN SUWA.

OH.



NATURALLY, THE POWERFUL FAMILIES OF SUWA DIDN'T WANT THEIR PATRON GOD TO HAVE LOWER STATUS THAN THE GREAT SUN GODDESS AMATERASU.





HIRAKATA
SHRINE,
ALSO CALLED
CHIKEN
TEMPLE.

THAT'S
ALSO
A SHRINE
TO TAKE-
MINAKATA.



BUT THE
ARM AND
LEG BONES
WERE FOUND
AT HIRAKATA
SHRINE
IN ECHIGO!
I THINK
WE SHOULD
GO THERE.

SHIRAOKA-SAN,
CAN YOU
REMEMBER
WHAT THOSE
"PRIESTS IN
DIRTY ROBES"
SAID?

ALTHOUGH THE SHRINE
IS DEDICATED TO THE GODS
OF FERTILITY, THERE'S
AN STORY IN WHICH THE DEFEATED
TAKEMINAKATA SOUGHT REFUGE
AT IKUSHIMA-TARUSHIMA.
THEY STILL CELEBRATE HIS
VISIT AT THE SHRINE TODAY.

WHAT ABOUT
SHIMONOGOU?
THERE'S IKUSHIMA-
TARUSHIMA
SHRINE...
MAYBE THAT
WOULD WORK.

IKUSHIMA-
TARUSHIMA
SHRINE IS
LOCATED IN AKEMI'S
HOMETOWN.
A GOOD LUCK CHARM
MADE WITH SATA
NOBUYOSHI'S
HANDPRINT
WAS ON RECORD
THERE...

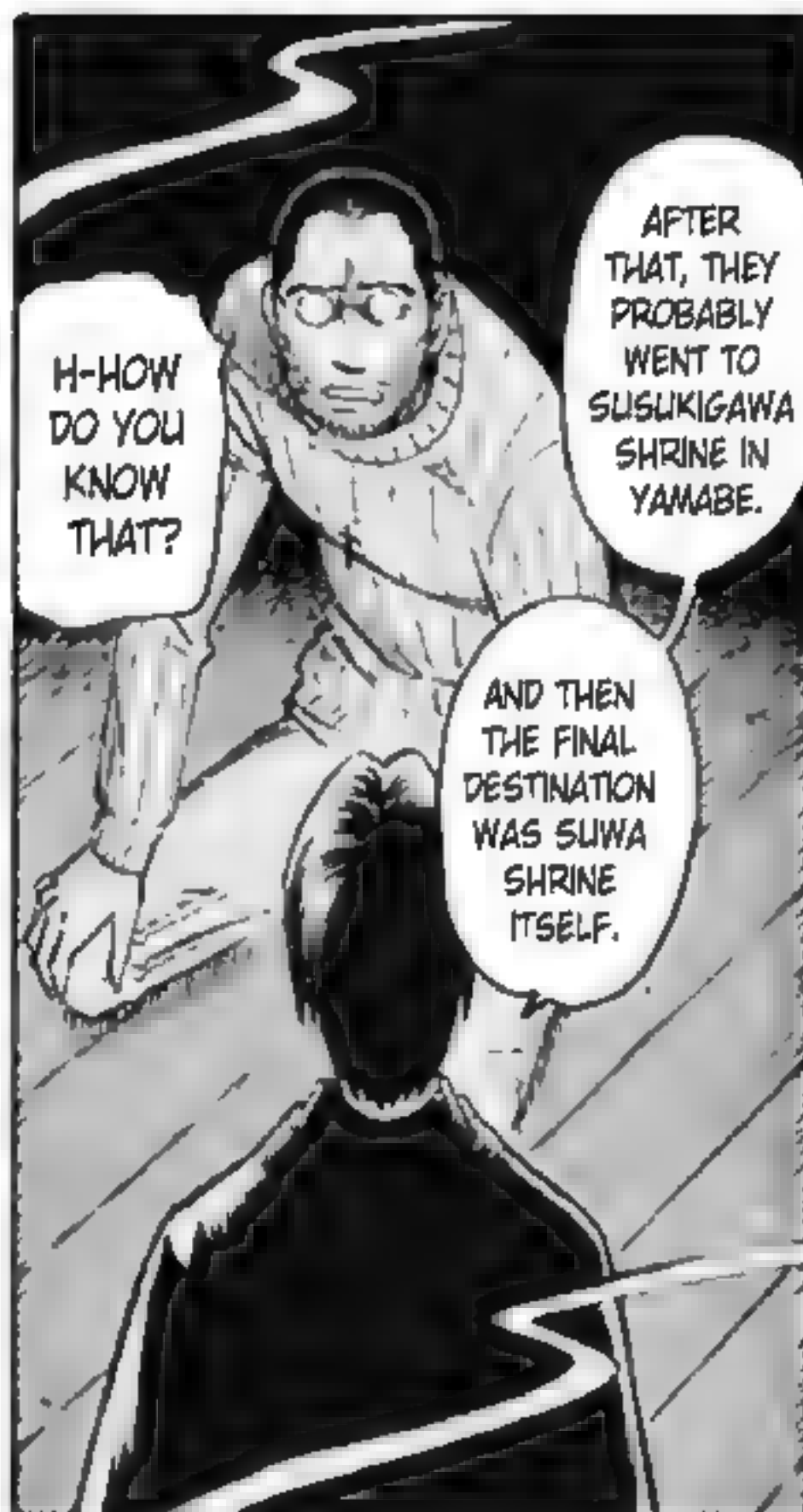
WHAT
ABOUT
ZENKOUJI
TEMPLE?

ZENKOUJI
TEMPLE IS
A MIXED
BUDDHIST-
SHINTO TEMPLE
IN THE TOWN
OF SHIROYAMA
IN NAGANO
PREFECTURE.

AND
IT'S RIGHT
NEXT TO A
SHRINE TO
TAKEMINAKATA
AND HIS SON,
HIKOKAMI-
WAKE.



BECAUSE
THEY WERE
RETRACING THE
ROUTE THAT
TAKEMINAKATA TOOK
WHEN HE ESCAPED
FROM IZUMO.



H-HOW
DO YOU
KNOW
THAT?

AFTER
THAT, THEY
PROBABLY
WENT TO
SUSUKIGAWA
SHRINE IN
YAMABE.

AND THEN
THE FINAL
DESTINATION
WAS SUWA
SHRINE
ITSELF.



BUT...
WHY?



THOSE
PRIESTS
MUST HAVE
BEEN
GATHERING
HIS BONES.

AFTER
TAKEMINAKATA
DIED, HIS BONES
WERE DIVIDED
BETWEEN SEVERAL
SHRINES.

OR SO THE
LEGENDS SAY.



THE ARM
BONES WERE
FOUND
IN IZUMO,
AFTER ALL.

TAKE-
MINAKATA
LOST AN
ARM IN HIS
BATTLE
AGAINST THE
INVADING
GODS OF
HEAVEN.



THEY MUST
HAVE WANDERED
THROUGHOUT
THE COUNTRY, USING
ORAL TRADITIONS AND
WRITTEN LEGENDS TO
TRACK DOWN THE
MISSING BONES UNTIL
ONLY THE HEAD
WAS LEFT.

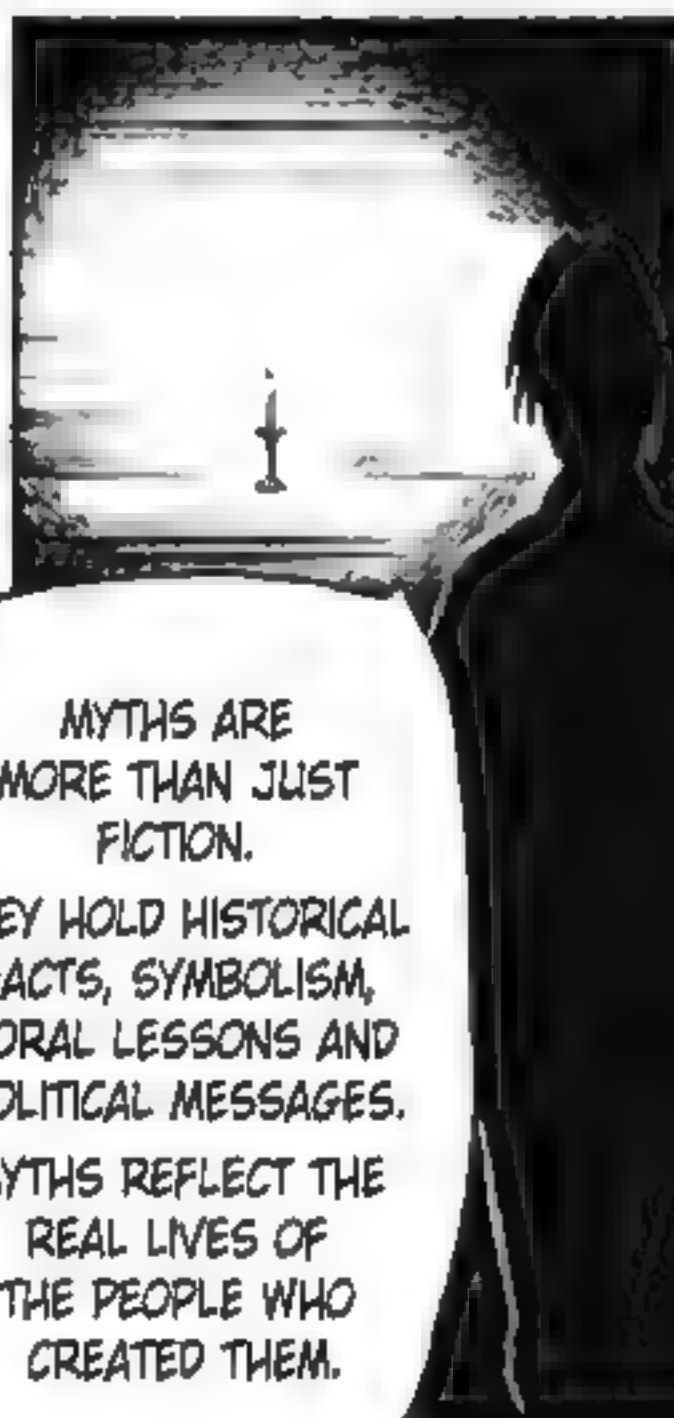
WHAT A
FRIGHTENING
OBSESSION.

THOSE PRIESTS
WERE CARRYING OUT A
GOAL THAT HAD
BEEN PASSED DOWN
THROUGH THE GENERATIONS:
THE RESURRECTION
OF THEIR DEFEATED GOD.
IN ORDER TO DO THIS,
THEY NEEDED TO
ASSEMBLE THE
HOLY RELICS.

TO
RESURRECT
A GOD.



MYTHS ARE
MORE THAN JUST
FICTION.
THEY HOLD HISTORICAL
FACTS, SYMBOLISM,
MORAL LESSONS AND
POLITICAL MESSAGES.
MYTHS REFLECT THE
REAL LIVES OF
THE PEOPLE WHO
CREATED THEM.



THERE ARE
STILL REAL, LIVING
GODS IN JAPAN,
AREN'T THERE?
THE IMPERIAL
FAMILY IS SAID TO
BE DESCENDED
FROM THE SUN
GODDESS.

WAIT A MINUTE,
KYOUGOKUDOU!

ARE THOSE
REALLY THE
BONES OF A
GOD!?

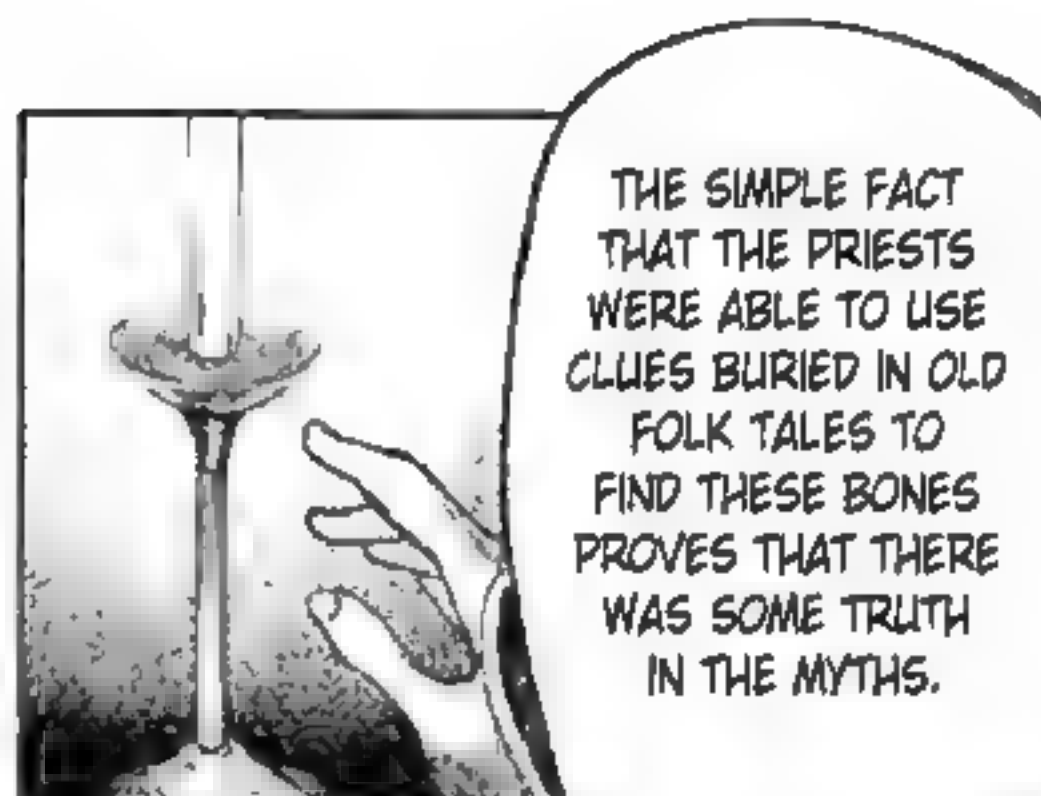


ISN'T
IT ALL
JUST A
MYTH!?

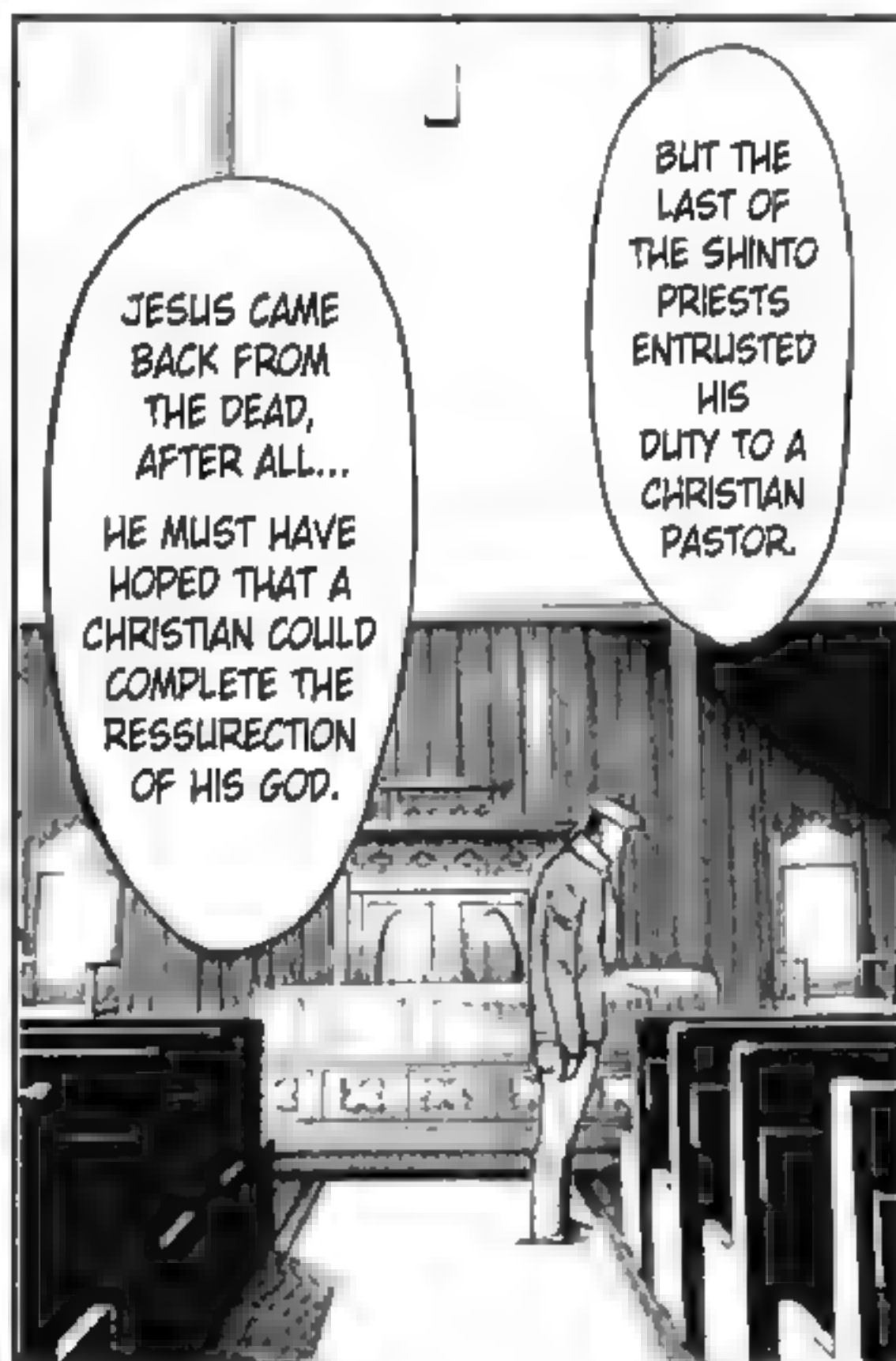


THE
RESURRECTION
THEY SOUGHT
WAS NOT MERELY
THE RESTORATION
OF THE FLESH
OR THE SPIRIT.

THEY
WANTED TO
CREATE A
LIVING
GOD.



THE SIMPLE FACT
THAT THE PRIESTS
WERE ABLE TO USE
CLUES BURIED IN OLD
FOLK TALES TO
FIND THESE BONES
PROVES THAT THERE
WAS SOME TRUTH
IN THE MYTHS.



JESUS CAME
BACK FROM
THE DEAD,
AFTER ALL...
HE MUST HAVE
HOPED THAT A
CHRISTIAN COULD
COMPLETE THE
RESSURECTION
OF HIS GOD.

BUT THE
LAST OF
THE SHINTO
PRIESTS
ENTRUSTED
HIS
DUTY TO A
CHRISTIAN
PASTOR.



OF
COURSE,
YOU HAD
NO IDEA,
RIGHT?

THE TRUE
GOAL OF THE
PRIESTS WAS
TO BRING
BACK THEIR
FALLEN GOD
SO THAT HE
COULD TAKE
HIS REVENGE
AGAINST
HEAVEN...





SO THEY
NEEDED TO
DETERMINE
WHERE
THE HEAD
WAS AND
WHO HAD IT.

ANY-
WAY,

THE
PRIESTS
WERE ABLE
TO FIND ALL
OF TAKE-
MINAKATA'S
BONES...
EXCEPT FOR
THE HEAD.



OH!

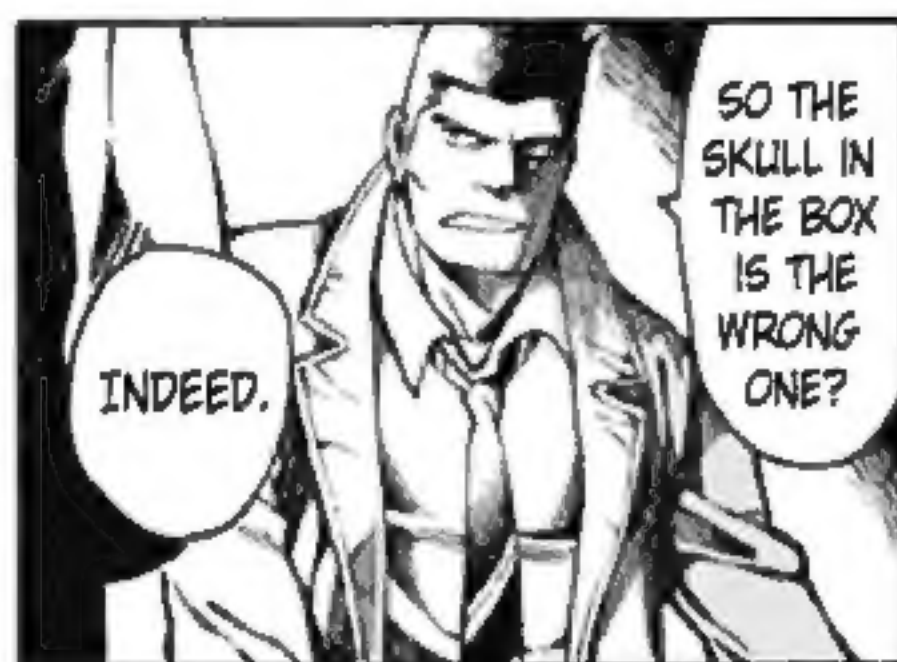
THAT WAS
AKEMI-SAN'S
HOMETOWN
RIGHT?



THE
GOD'S
HEAD...

HAS
ALREADY
BEEN
FOUND.

IN THE
VILLAGE OF
MINAKATA,
NEAR THE
TOWN OF
SHIODAIRA IN
SHINSHUU.



INDEED.

SO THE
SKULL IN
THE BOX
IS THE
WRONG
ONE?



THEN WHERE
IS IT?
I THOUGHT
THAT WAS
SUPPOSED
TO BE THE
GOD'S HEAD...

NOTE Most common people in Japan didn't use surnames until 1898, when the government mandated that everyone choose a name. People often used the name of their village, or a name inspired by nature, or the name of a famous historical figure, or a lucky name chosen by a priest. It wasn't unusual for everyone in a small town to have the same surname.



Akemi-san's family has carried the weight of a god's vengeance for countless generations...

Oh, I almost
forgot about him...

He certainly looks
the part of a wise
Buddhist sage...



BUT
FIRST...

I'D LIKE
TO HEAR
WHAT THE
HEAD
MONK
HERE
HAS TO
SAY.



IS
HIM.

AFTER ALL,
THE ONLY
PERSON WHO
KNOWS
WHAT REALLY
HAPPENED
BACK THEN...

